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100TH ANNIVERSARY ISSUE

New Mexico

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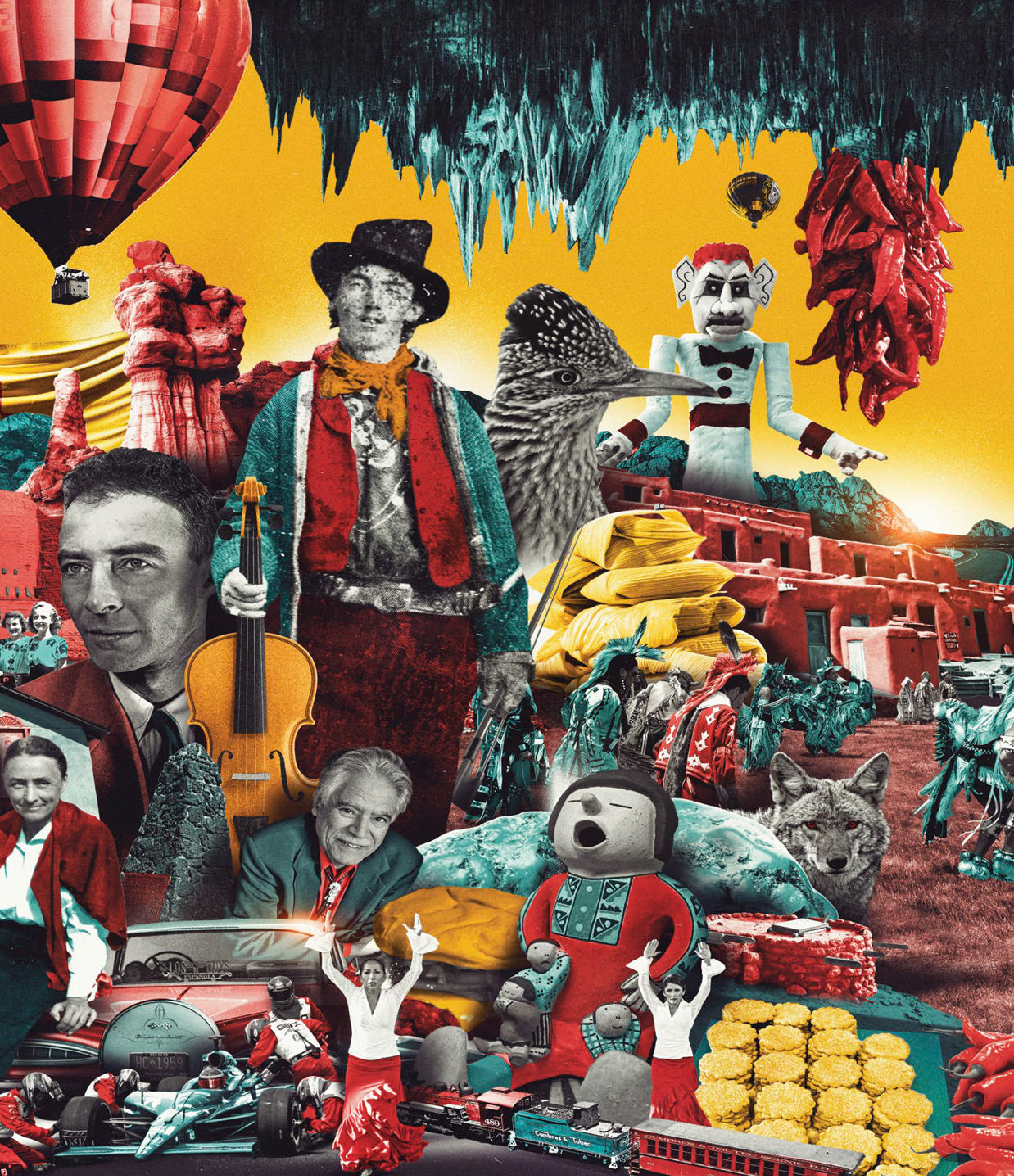

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Clockwise from top left: Ladder leading into Coronado Historic Site's painted kiva, photograph by Eric Moldonado. Jar, Acoma Pueblo or Laguna Pueblo, ca. 1910, gift of Juan Olivas, MIAC 12024/12, photograph by Addison Doty. Eagle Dancers performing at Indian Market, Santa Fe, New Mexico, 1991, courtesy Palace of the Governors Photo Archives (NMHM/DCA), neg. no. HP.2014.14.676. Fort Selden during the Summer Nights event, photograph by Norm Dettlaff/Visit Las Cruces. Image courtesy of Baila! Baila! Dance Academy and Lozoya Studios. Jaguar mask, ca. 1960, Mexico, gift of the Girard Foundation Collection (A.1979.17.768), Museum of International Folk Art. An astronaut on the John P. Stapp Air and Space Park, courtesy of New Mexico Museum of Space History.

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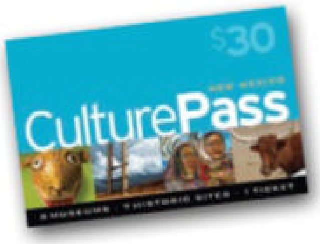
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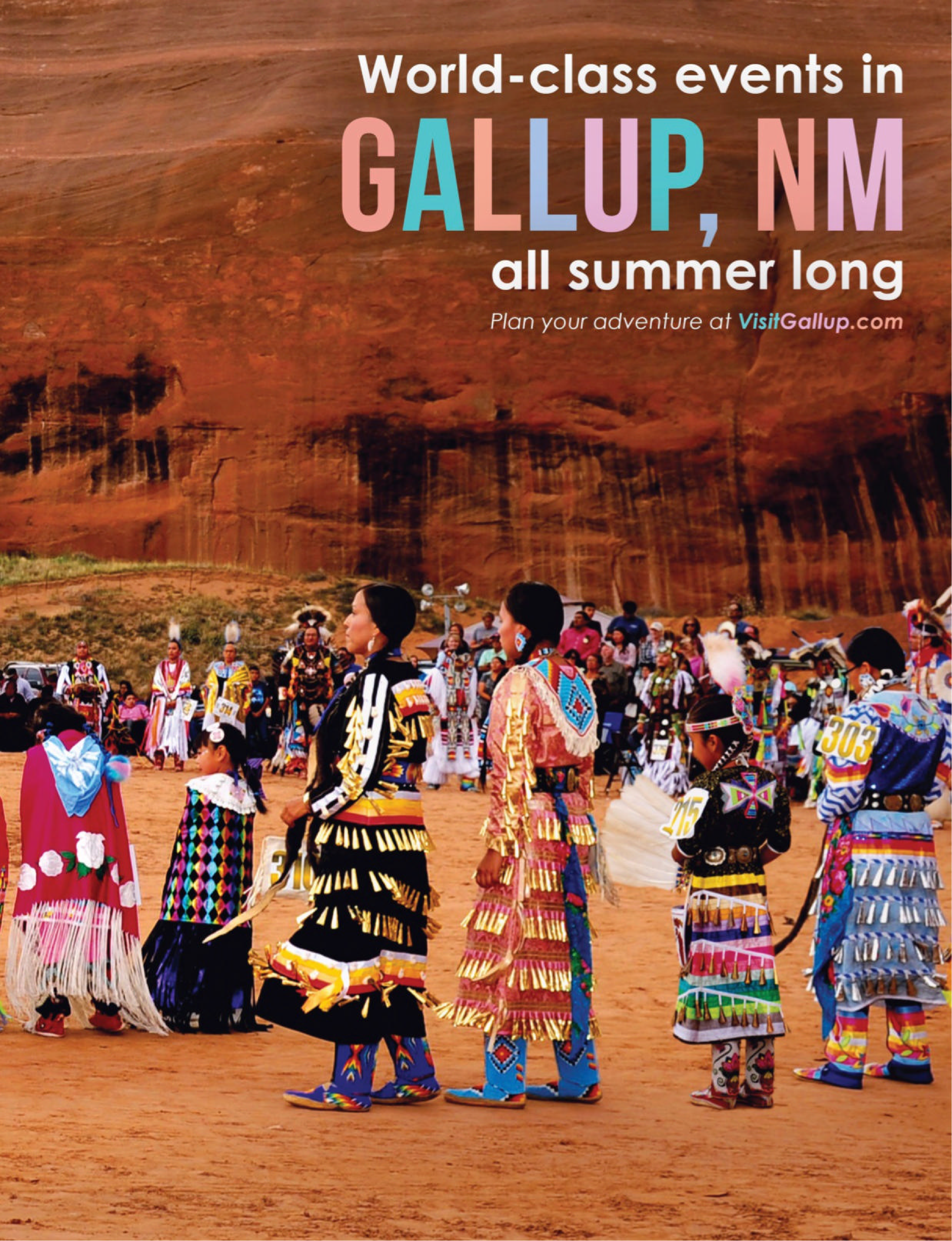
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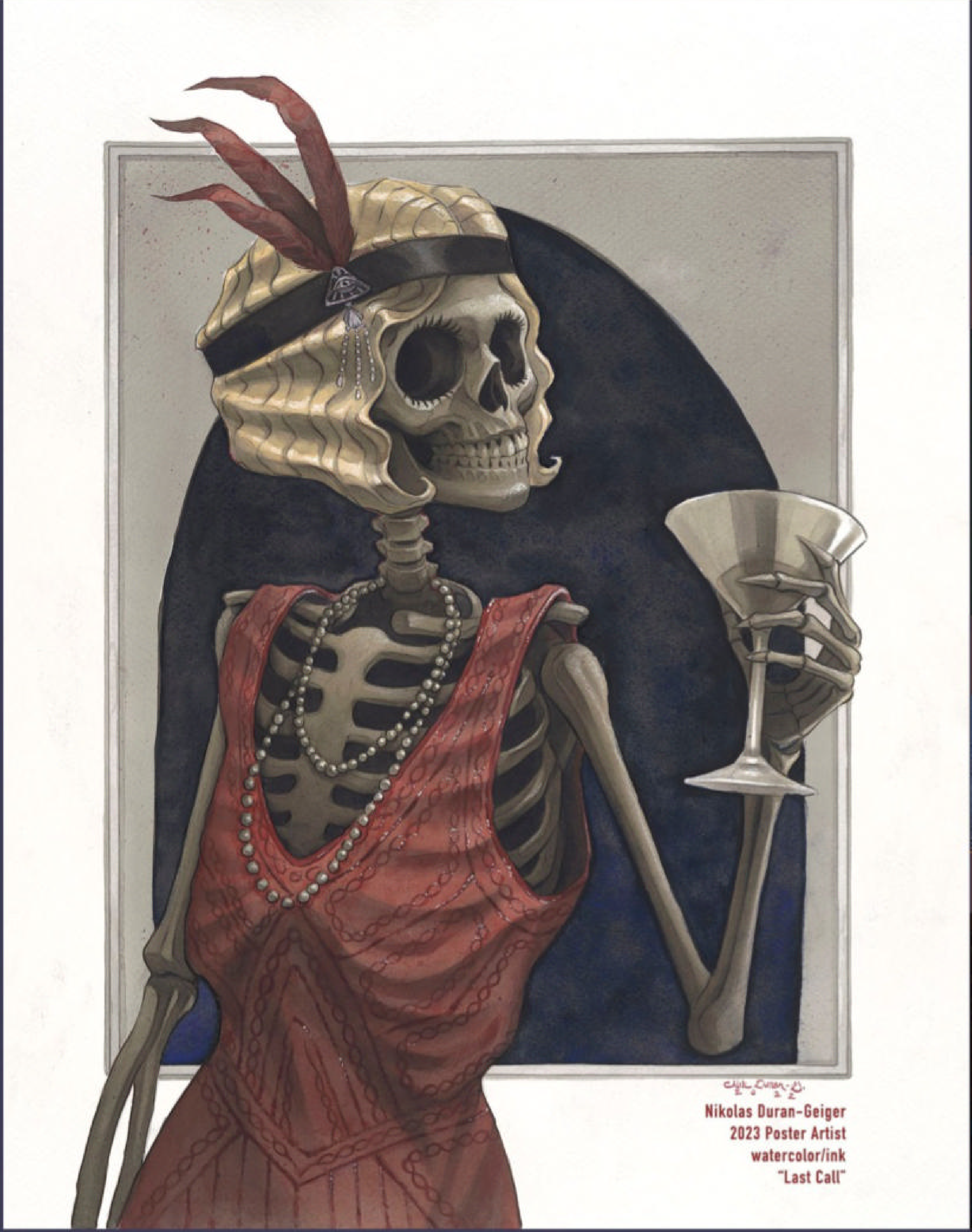

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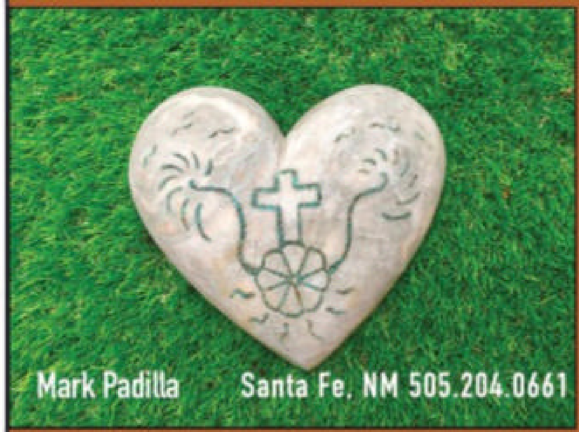

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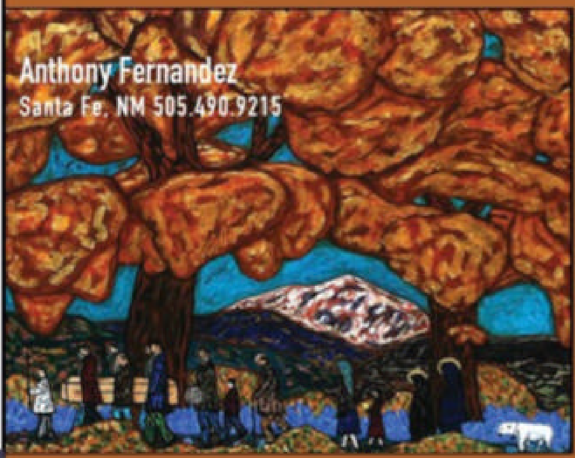

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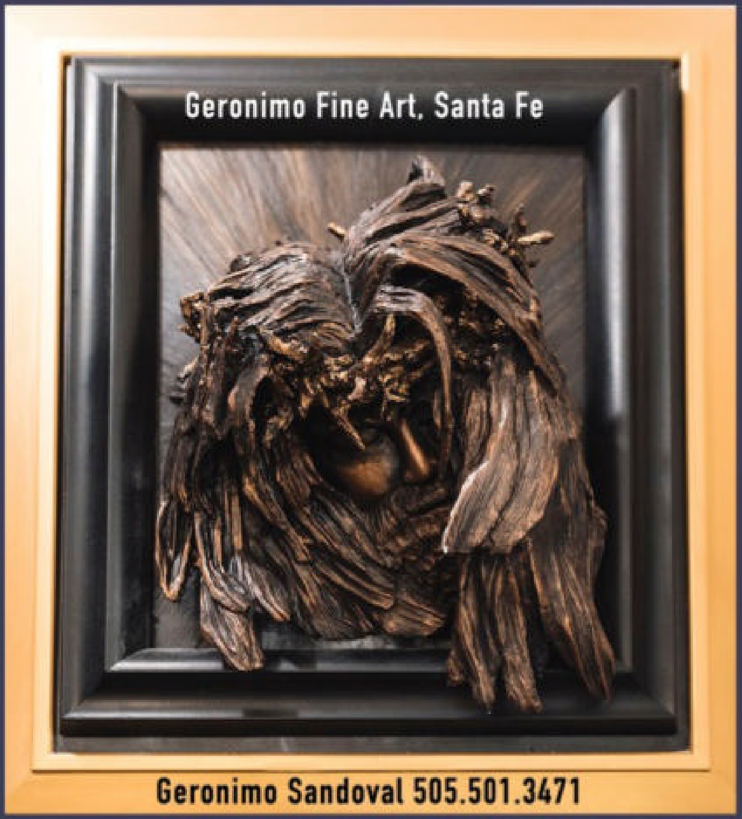
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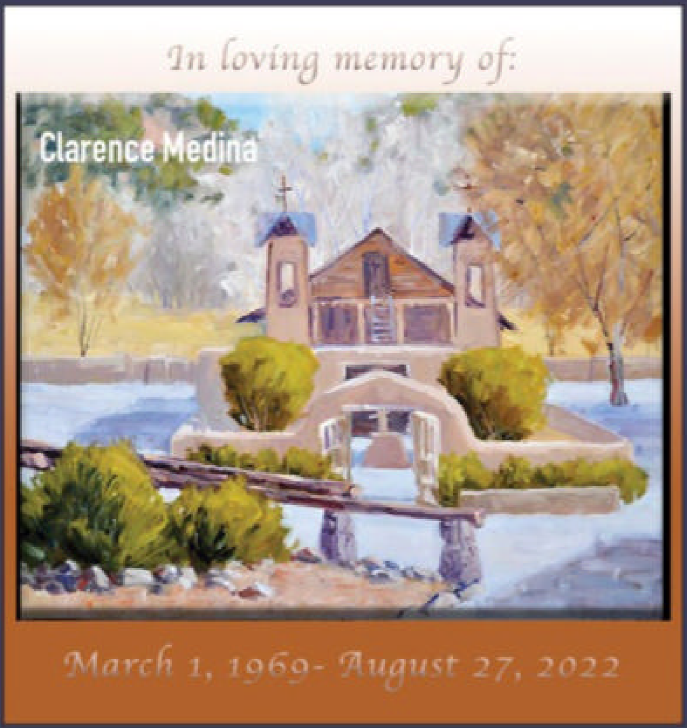
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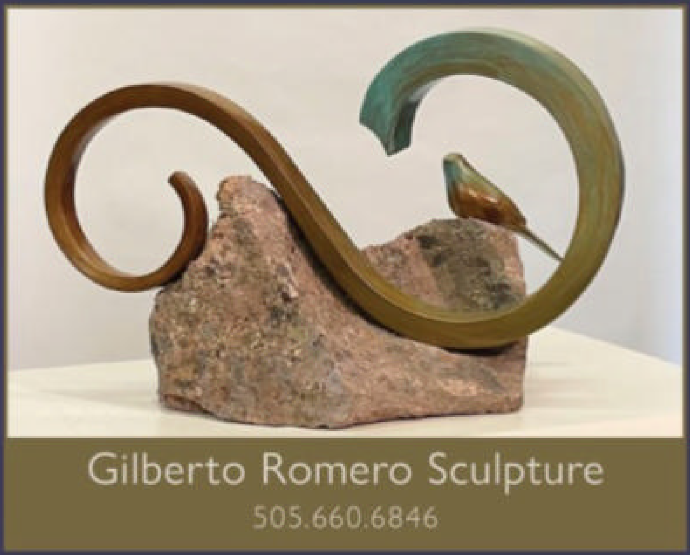
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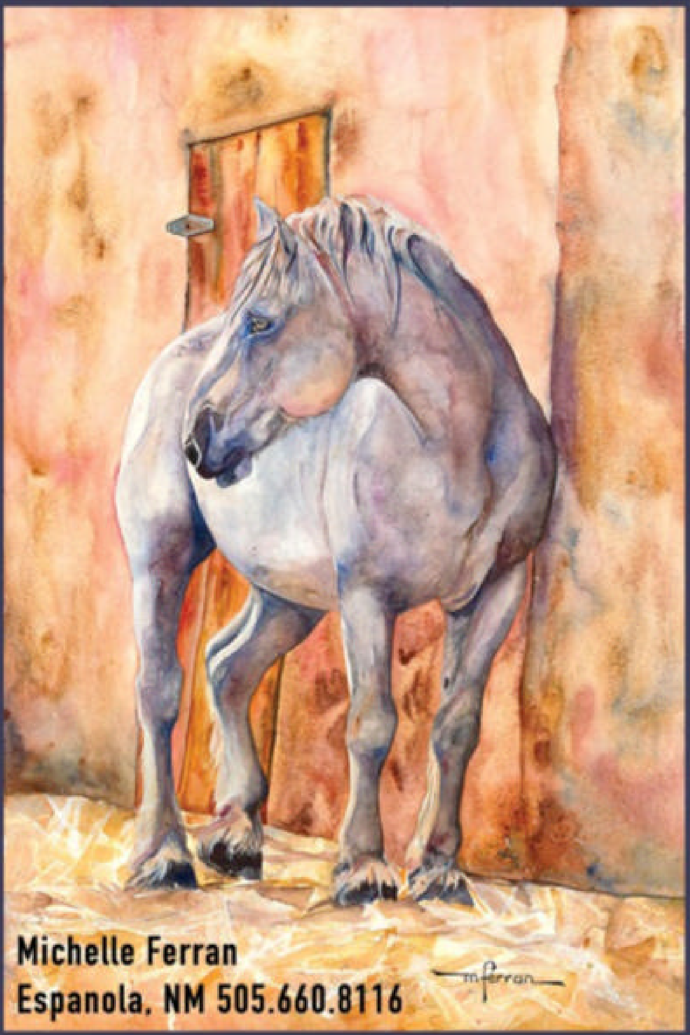
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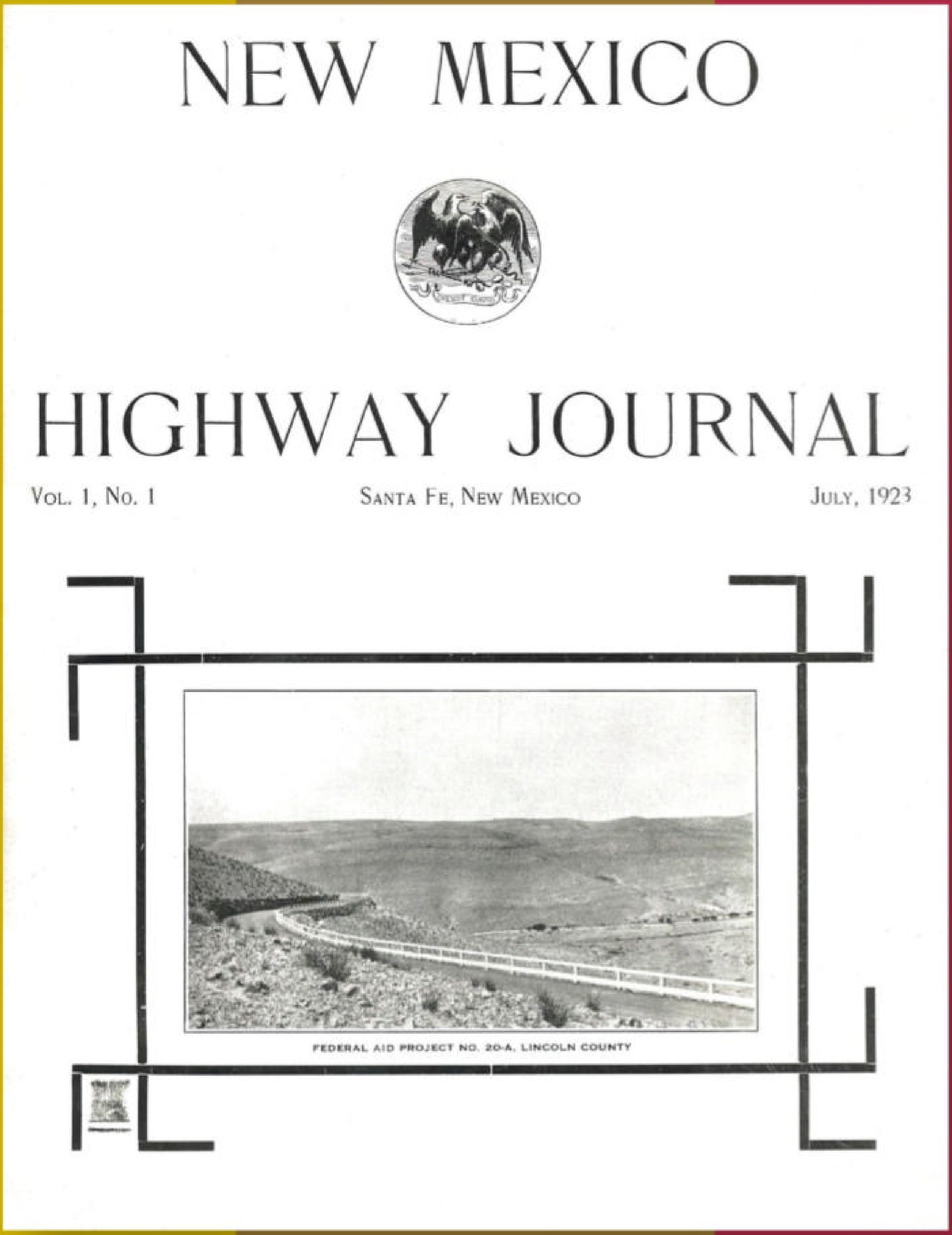
VOLUME 101 | ISSUE 6

FEATURES

JULY 2023



NEW MEXICO

HIGHWAY JOURNAL

Vol. 1, No. 1 Santa Fe, New Mexico July, 1923

FEDERAL AID PROJECT NO. 20-A, LINCOLN COUNTY

44
Why We Love New Mexico
To celebrate our 100th anniversary, we asked New Mexicans to reflect on a few of their favorite things.
Edited by Molly Boyle and Steve Gleydura

ON THE COVER
Art, balloons, chile, Smokey, and much more.
Illustration by Neil Jamieson

THIS PAGE
The cover of our first issue featured a highway project in Lincoln County.

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Tosca Illustration by
Benedetto Cristofani

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One of Our 50 Is Missing
Yes, it's a state. No passport required.

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NEWMEXICOMAGAZINE.ORG

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Art
The New Mexico Museum of Natural History & Science is prepping new digs for its precious fossils.

From top: Elephant Butte Lake isn't the only attraction in the tiny town these days. Eduardo Rodriguez makes Zacatlán Restaurant a welcoming spot.

Featured Locations

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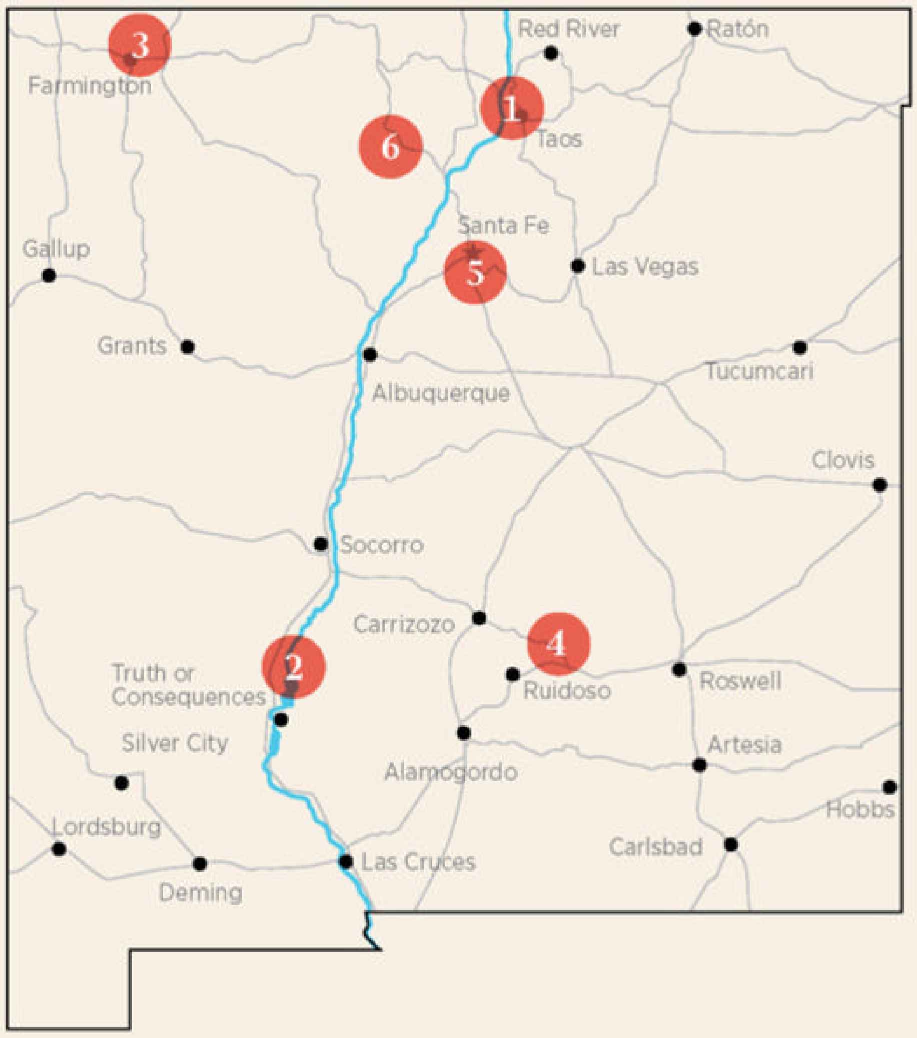
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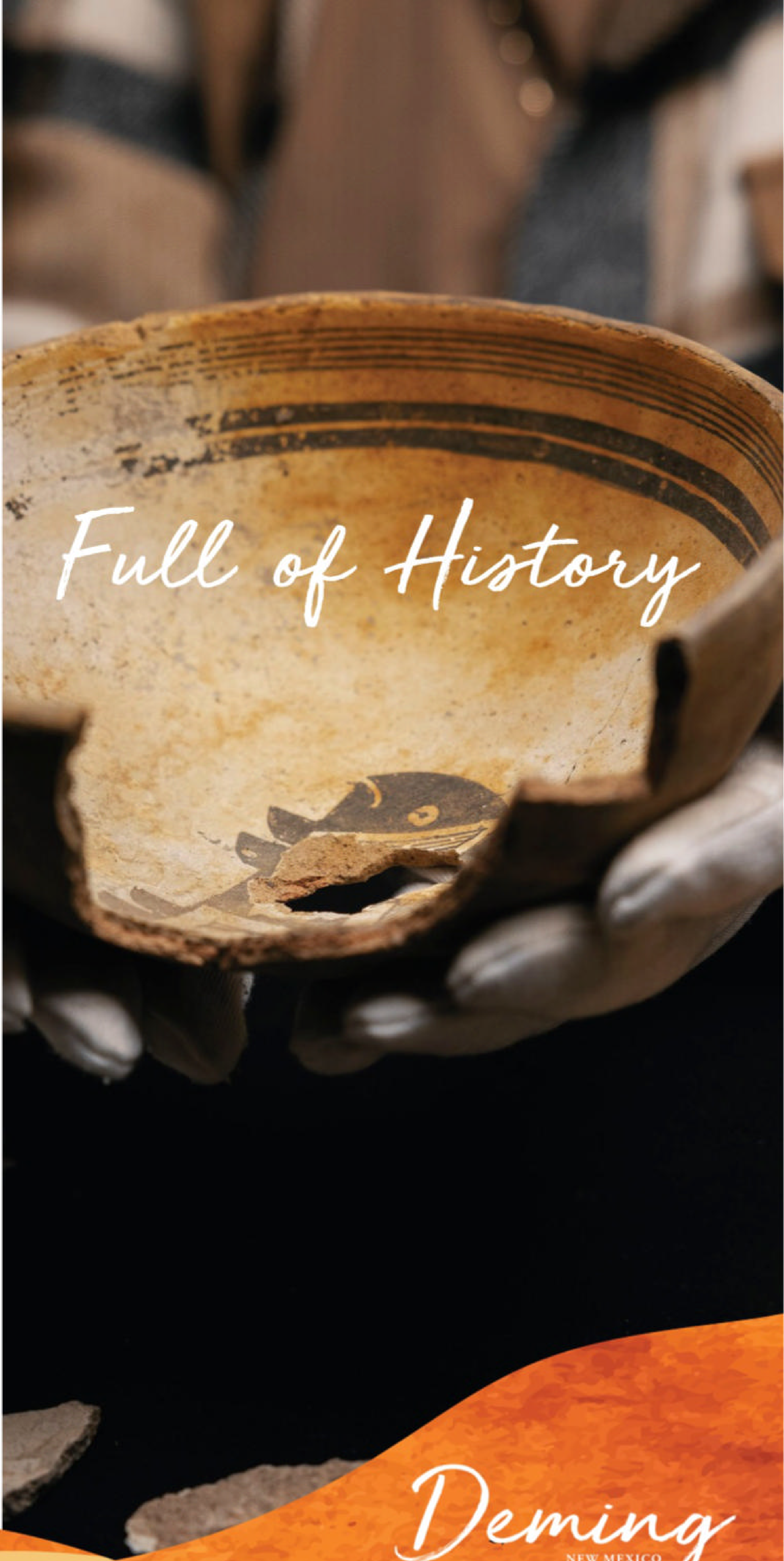
STEFAN WACHS, DOUGLAS MERRIAM

Come explore Deming, NM and find plenty of space to roam. Visit a treasured museum to discover stunning Native America pottery made a millennium ago by ancient tribes who lived in the area. Enjoy outdoor activities in scenic mountains and parks. Take a step back in time with the downtown Deming Historic Walking Tour. Deming is the place for everyone from outdoor adventurers to history buffs, vacationing families and retirees. It's the way the West used to be.



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EDITOR'S LETTER

100 Strong

One hundred years ago, the goals of the *New Mexico Highway Journal* were rather simple. In July 1923, that 16-page debut issue of what was to become *New Mexico Magazine* aspired to present some of the achievements, difficulties, and hopes of the highway department while advocating for the "need, construction, cost and maintenance of good roads" and promoting "the attractions of New Mexico as a national playground." The public was encouraged to submit articles, "accompanied if possible by pictures," and ask "reasonable questions" that editors would answer. There would also be a folded map at the back "containing much useful and valuable information."

And yet, those early ideals set forth by editor R.W. Bennett and the highway department feel wildly ambitious and wholly inspirational, too. New Mexico had achieved statehood only 11 years earlier, and car ownership was just starting to take hold.

Maybe that's why it feels so humbling to be a part of that legacy and advance those values. New Mexico and its people are special. You can feel it while looking back through the 10 decades of this publication. (That's something you can also experience at the New Mexico History Museum's current *Enchantorama* exhibition, which celebrates the magazine's centennial.)

It's evident, too, in this month's anniversary feature, in which writers, artists, scholars, ranchers, chefs, and everyday New Mexicans share their perspectives on "Why We Love New Mexico" (p. 44).

Given our roots as a publication, it's fitting that Lesley Poling-Kempes, who started her career as a *New Mexico Magazine* intern in 1976, opens it with a paean to dirt roads. "Leaning out the car window, I took in this new world one slow, jostling quarter mile at a time," she writes. "The deeper we moved into that light- and time-carved land, the more I sensed I was coming home to a place where this country's stories, known and unknown, became personal, became my story."

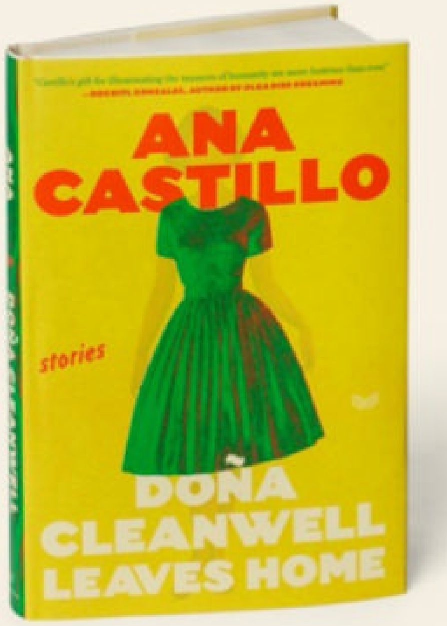
Her essay harmonizes with many other voices in expressing a deep, even primal connection with this place, with things we can touch and others that touch us in turn. And while the reasons we have for loving New Mexico—far too many to count—are as diverse as we are, they connect us all in rich and meaningful ways. Thank you for being a part of this journey, and here's to the next 100 years.

Steve Gleydura
Editor in Chief
editor@nmmagazine.com

WHAT TO READ THIS MONTH

My best friend and I traded Ana Castillo's *The Mixquiahuala Letters* back and forth during high school, inspired by the novel's clear-eyed depiction of a long friendship between two women artists. In her new short-fiction collection, ***Doña Cleanwell Leaves Home*** (HarperVia), Castillo invents domestic dramas from Chicago to Mexico, revealing decades-old household secrets and the women who must navigate them. The queen of feminist Chicana fiction closes out with the potent title story, in which Katia must decide between joining the farmworkers' movement and getting her newly liberated mother to come home for good.

—*Molly Boyle*



MOLLY GLEYDURA, INGA HENDRICKSON

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STORYTELLERS

Tracy Dingmann

WHY WE LOVE NEW MEXICO, P. 44

Born and raised in the Midwest, Tracy Dingmann moved to New Mexico in 1990 for a job at the *Albuquerque Journal*. During her 18 years as a reporter, she interviewed thousands of New Mexicans. "I love the people, the weather, and the vistas in my adopted state," she says. Dingmann contributed two stories to this month's 100th-anniversary feature, including an interview with Mary Lavin, manager of Smokey Bear Historical Park. "I did not know there was a New Mexico Wildland Fallen Firefighter Memorial at Smokey Bear Park," she says. "I'm planning a trip there this summer with my favorite 10-year-old to visit the memorial."

Neil Jamieson

WHY WE LOVE NEW MEXICO, COVER

Neil Jamieson, creative director of the Sporting Press, is an ASME and Emmy award–winning illustrator and designer. Formerly the creative director for ESPN and art director for *Sports Illustrated*, he's designed dozens of magazine covers and media campaigns for some of the world's biggest brands. He started the Sporting Press in 2019. "I was 18 years old when I first made my way to New Mexico," Jamieson says. An art student, he was inspired by Terrence Malick's movie *Badlands* to take a solo train trip from New York to Albuquerque with just a few dollars, a rail pass, and a sketchbook. "I lost the sketchbook, but the people I met, the scenery, the culture, and those incredible skies stay with me."

Jennifer C. Olson

DESTINATIONS, P. 32; WHY WE LOVE NEW MEXICO, P. 44

Freelance journalist Jennifer C. Olson got her start in travel and outdoor writing before editing *The Independent*, the alternative weekly in her hometown of Silver City, and eventually working in communications for Western New Mexico University. During her first up-close experience with the Caballo Mountains, Olson saw evidence of mining activity and learned that the Palomas Gap mines initially produced copper but were most noted for their vanadium and lead content. "It was like being inside a geode!" says Olson, who visited the area this time on an OHV tour of Elephant Butte. "Locals call it the Soda Bubble Mine, but you won't find that label on a map."

New Mexico
MAGAZINE

100th Year: The Original State Magazine

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IN RELATION TO ALL THINGS

ILLUSTRATIONS BY SHOUT

In the Gila Wilderness, the life and death of a raven tells a larger story of devotion.

BY JENNIFER DOUGLASS

Flight Club

Thank you for the touching and powerful message within Jennifer Douglass's "In Relation to All Things" (May). Not only did the story grow my appreciation of ravens, it also served as a renewed awakening. The need to preserve and conserve has never been greater, so we can continue to commune with other living things that can teach us many lessons if we just stop to listen. Your magazine continues to amaze me with stories that share the heart of nature, art, history, and cultures in your state.

SUSAN SCHNECK
Largo, Florida

Birds of a Feather

What a treat it was to read Jennifer Douglass's beautiful essay "In Relation to All Things" (May). I read it once, then read it again, learning a little more each time about the beautiful ravens and their devotion to each other in life and in death. As an avid bird lover, I know how intelligent corvids are, so their bond to each other should have come as no surprise. Still, it moved me as I considered these beautiful, magnificent birds and, as Douglass describes it, their "unconditional love."

TRICIA GAITELY
Murfreesboro, Tennessee

Where's the Beef?

I am a native New Mexican, born in Las Cruces, but left to teach in California for 13 years before returning to Taos, where I lived for 12 years. I especially loved your two features—"Green Chile Cheeseburgers" (May 2022) and "Classic Eats" (May)—but your staff keeps missing the Lovato Burger Cafe, in Dixon. I am always searching for the best New Mexico cuisine in the state, and Lovato's green chile cheeseburger is the best!

ESTELLA RUBIN
Las Cruces

We're missing those burgers, too! Sadly, Lovato Burger Cafe closed in the late 1990s.

WHERE ARE YOU GOING FOR A CLASSIC NEW MEXICO MEAL?

In Silver City, Jalisco Cafe is a restaurant you need to visit. I haven't been in a couple of years since we live out of state, but I'm looking forward to going back.

JOHN O'MARY
Enterprise, Alabama

Still Can't Beat Mom's

I am a native New Mexican, born in Torreón, in Torrance County. More than 40 years ago, I moved to the East Coast, but remained close to my roots by subscribing to *New Mexico Magazine*. I have enjoyed many of your publications, but Classic Eats (May) was the best. I have had the distinct pleasure of eating at several of the fine eateries featured. Still, to me, there was no better cook than my beloved mother, Juanita Chávez, whose culinary wisdom continues in my kitchen.

DIMAS M. CHÁVEZ
Bethesda, Maryland

Heat Check

I enjoyed your editor's letter ("Full Service," May) regarding hot green chile. But surely you and Anthony Bourdain know that milk is the only thing that will stop the heat. Next time, have a glass standing by.

KAY CROMARTIE
Fernandina Beach, Florida

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THE LOWDOWN

YOUR MONTHLY GUIDE TO NEW MEXICO CULTURE

JULY

Open Season

With five operas, 38 performances, and the best tailgate in town, the Santa Fe Opera's 66th Festival Season promises a jam-packed summer of open-air theater. Puccini's *Tosca* kicks things off on June 30, followed by Wagner's *The Flying Dutchman* on July 1. *santafeopera.org*

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A LOOK BACK
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The opera's Crosby Theatre ensures that audiences can witness the majesty of a summer monsoon during a performance—while staying nice and dry.

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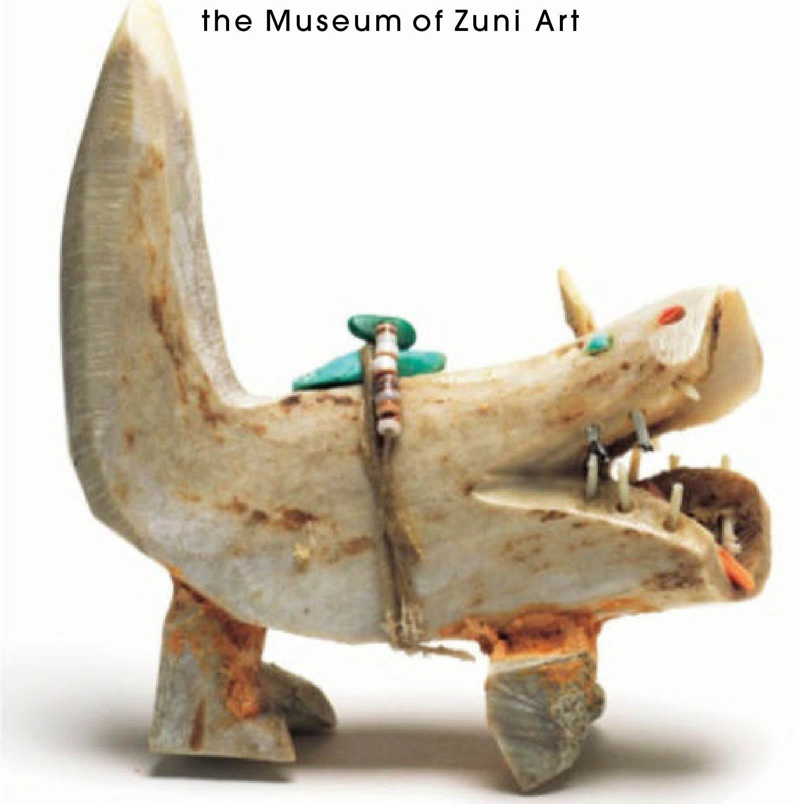
Leonard Halate

Leo Poblano

The Keshi Foundation announces the Museum of Zuni Art at ZART: the Zuni Artist Resource Team
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The International Folk Art Market moves to the Santa Fe Railyard this year.

That's not all July has in store! Go to **nmmag.us/events** for more.

Folk Dance

Melissa Mann has had her eye on the Santa Fe Railyard for quite some time. "There's something happening," says the CEO of the International Folk Art Market. "There's an energy there." With ample parking, 13 acres of open space, and proximity to SITE Santa Fe, galleries, restaurants, and the Violet Crown Cinema, there's a lot to love about the district. The International Folk Art Market plans to tap into those good vibes by staging its annual festival, July 6–9, at the Railyard Park instead of its customary location on Museum Hill. More than 150 artists from over 50 countries, all practicing traditional folk art techniques, will be on hand to show and sell their work. A parade of artists to the Railyard water tower kicks off the festivities on Thursday, followed by a free concert. Mann says the area's emergence as a new cultural center helped to inspire the move. "It got us thinking what cultural space looks like," she says. "We're not moving away from something, we're moving to something."

—Maria Manuela

Climb aboard. With abundant parking, a train stop near the event, and additional New Mexico Rail Runner trains, getting to the Folk Art Market will be easier than ever. "We have a partnership with the Rail Runner," Mann says, meaning that visitors can buy a combination train-and-market ticket. "You can park at any of their depots and be dropped off practically at the door of the event."

Take flight, night owls. The Night Market on Saturday will feature artist booths, live music from French band Delgres, and boozy beverages from Tumbleroot Brewery and Distillery. "The evening will be really thrilling," Mann says.

Dive deeper. Throughout the run of the market, a lecture series at SITE Santa Fe offers hands-on activities, educational opportunities for kids, and talks by field experts. "If you're really interested in understanding more of the context, like the relationship between a designer and maker and the difficulties folk artists face," Mann says, "you can partake in the series."

INTERNATIONAL FOLK ART MARKET
July 6–9, Santa Fe Railyard Park
folkartmarket.org

6/30–7/2
Roswell UFO Festival

Have a close encounter of the fun kind at this festival that includes a 5K run, drone show, kids' zone, film festival, experts on the Roswell Incident, fire dancers, and more. ***ufofestival.com***

7/7–7/18
Los Alamos ScienceFest

Discovery Day, which happens on July 8, is the high this 10-day festival that aims to engage the community in history and scientific experimentation. ***losalamossciencefest.com***

7/21–7/23
Ruidoso Art and Wine Festival

See work by more than 100 artists and sip vintages from local wineries at this juried art show in the Ruidoso Convention Center. ***nmmag.us/rawf***

7/29–7/30
Traditional Spanish Market

The country's oldest and largest show of Spanish art has graced Santa Fe since 1926, featuring traditional woodcarving, tinwork, silversmithing, and painting. ***atriscoheritagefoundation.org***

Geek out at Los Alamos ScienceFest.

GABRIELLA MARKS, COURTESY OF LOS ALAMOS SCIENCEFEST

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Santa Fe Opera

7/1, 7/7, 7/12 & 7/31
The Flying Dutchman

6/30, 7/5, 7/8, 7/14 & 7/21
Tosca

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Pelléas et Mélisande

7/22 & 7/26
Rusalka

7/29
Orfeo

¡Que Vivan las Fiestas!

7/1
Fiestas de Las Vegas

7/21
Fiestas de Taos

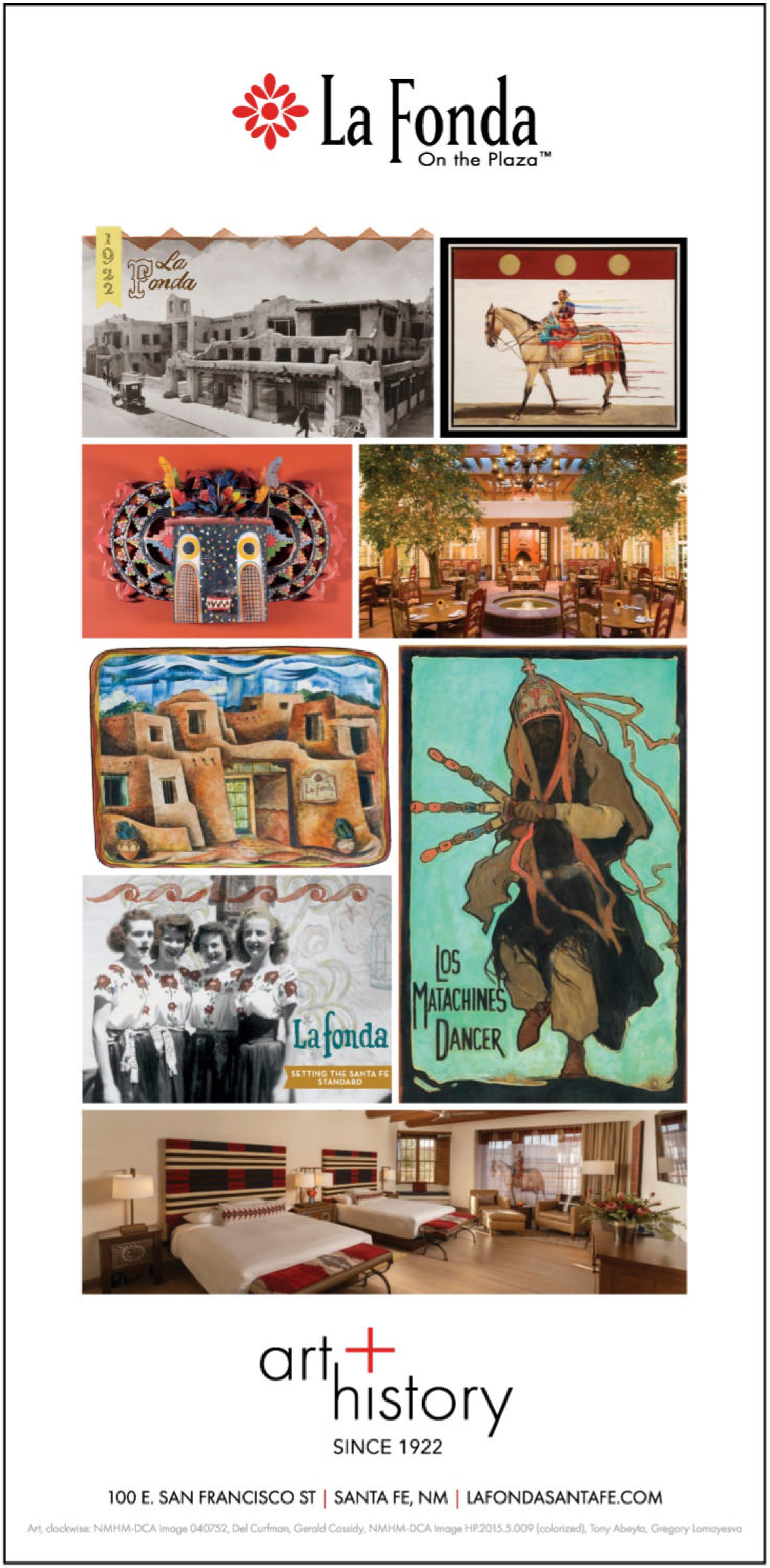
7/20–7/29

Connie Mack World Series

See the baseball talent of tomorrow take the field as amateur teams from all over the country come to Farmington to participate in this prestigious tournament, held at Ricketts Park every year since 1965.

cmws.org

CURTIS RAY BENALLY/TURKEYBOY PHOTOGRAPHY, COURTESY OF FIESTAS DE LAS VEGAS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A Look Back: July 1997

ANNIVERSARY ISSUE
María
Turning earth
into heavenly art
story and photography by Laura Gilpin
COMMEMORATIVE EDITION
NEW MEXICO
75th
SPECIAL 75TH ANNIVERSARY ISSUE
New Mexico
THE ORIGINAL STATE MAGAZINE
1923–2023
100TH ANNIVERSARY

ON THE COVER

Art director John Vaughn and assistant art director Daniel Martinez incorporated a February 1933 cover, which features ***The Navajo Shepherdess*** by Gerald Cassidy, into the design for our 75th anniversary.

María

Turning earth into heavenly art.

Story and photographs by Laura Gilpin

A short time ago, I went out to San Ildefonso Pueblo, 23 miles northwest of Santa Fe, to see María Martinez, the great potter and my friend of long standing. I took with me a large photogravure of a picture taken by Edward S. Curtis, the famous photographer, in 1905. Its subject was a corn dance there.

I was making a gift of the Curtis print to the pueblo. Before presenting it to the governor, I wanted to see how many people María could identify of perhaps 40 shown. To my surprise, she named at least eight among the dancers and chorus from that long ago.

Several friends joined us. There were "oohs!" at the sight of the small cottonwood that today is a great tree in the pueblo's north plaza. María and I sat under the portal of her son's house. It was a lovely summer day, no wind ... only the rush of children running toward the tree in a field day event on this Santiago Day.

We dropped in to reminiscence about persons known to both of us. María spoke first of the late Dr. Kenneth M. Chapman, the eminent anthropologist. As far back as 1908, she said, Dr. Chapman "was the one to encourage Julian and me in our early pottery-making." María was shaping the pots and her husband decorating them with sure, skillful designs. This was the beginning of their lifelong achievement. ...

María told me laughingly of a youngster who asked: "Grandma, how could you get those degrees when you never went to college?" The grandchild was referring to honors conferred by the University of Colorado and New Mexico State University.

She threw up her hands. "How could I answer?"

The answer is that María's education came with the beauty she brought to her art ... an education at which she stands at the highest level as attested by many medals, citations, and trips all over the country to demonstrate her skills.

Despite the bustle of modern life, San Ildefonso still lies quietly beside the Río Grande, its people resting on a dignity born of generations and an acceptance of life as it comes. As María had accepted Julian's passing in 1943. She is about 86, and when I took my leave, I was refreshed from her presence and newly aware of the deep richness of her life. She is a beautiful person.

Editor's note: Born in 1891, Laura Gilpin photographed the Southwest and its people for more than 60 years. She originally wrote this profile on potter María Martinez for the January 1974 issue of New Mexico Magazine. It was reprinted in the July 1997 issue.

See the full version of this story and others from our July 1997 issue at ***newmexicomagazine.org.***

QUOTABLE

"[Photographer Harvey Caplin] was as much at home on a horse as he was with his camera. Indeed, his many 'working cowboy' photographs were taken from atop a horse while he lived the daily life of the cowboy—gathering cattle, cutting, branding, busting broncs, and even just eating and sleeping. These photographs reflect the tremendous energy and rugged work that was the cowboy lifestyle, yet they capture the vivid majesty of the cowboy and his horse—his working partner—in mastering the job at hand."

—from "Focus on Harvey Caplin," by Debbie Tissot

INGA HENDRICKSON

O’Keeffe’s World

They don’t call her a lady painter anymore.

And though her work is saturated with feeling for the Southwest, nobody calls her a regional painter, either.

She’s an artist. Just that.

Her fame is international. Yet she’s probably one of New Mexico’s least-known residents. Georgia O’Keeffe prefers it that way.

They’ve labeled her an abstractionist, a realist, an impressionist, a surrealist, a pop artist, a hard-edge painter—a recluse.

Georgia O’Keeffe, who is all of these things and none of these things, continues calmly to lead her own life, to paint what she sees and feels, to carry on her love affair with the land that is New Mexico. The unreliable winds of public favor have never changed her view of herself or her work.

She’s 85, but clad in jeans, jacket, and white shirt, clear of mind and purpose, she might be a youthful and agile 60.

It was in 1917 that Georgia O’Keeffe first saw New Mexico on a three-day detour through Santa Fe with a younger sister. “From then on I was always on my way back,” she says now with that fleeting, knowing smile.

O’Keeffe’s world

Editor’s note: This story, originally titled “My time … my world,” first appeared in the January 1973 issue of the magazine and was reprinted in May 1986 following artist Georgia O’Keeffe’s death. It was reprinted again in the July 1997 issue to coincide with the opening of the Georgia O’Keeffe Museum, in Santa Fe.

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The Art of Water

At SITE Santa Fe, artists call us to the river—and to action. *By Molly Boyle*

Can a river sing? If you walk under the ramada in Santa Fe's Railyard Park this month, you can hear the Río Grande belting it out. At separate intervals along the pathway, hidden speakers transmit six distinct and eerily droning voices—each one a musical interpretation of streamflow data from six points along the great river's 1,800-mile length. The experience is like stepping into an auditory metaphor for climate change. As the melodies dwindle into each other, the mood is both hauntingly beautiful and disconcerting.

GOING WITH THE FLOW
Through July 31, SITE Santa Fe, 1606 Paseo de Peralta, Santa Fe; 505-989-1199,
sitesantafe.org

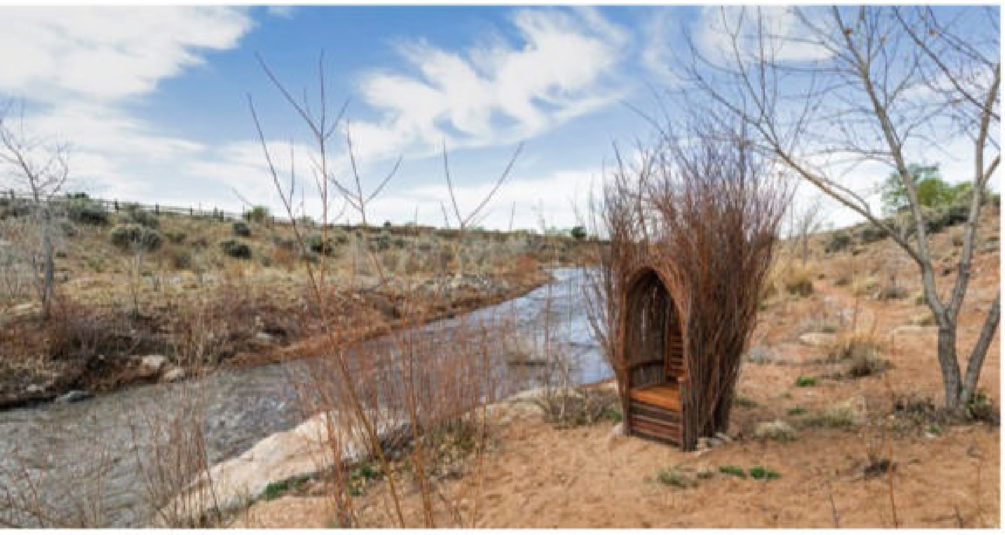
The musical installation, *There Must Be Other Names for the River*, culminates in a live choral performance of the piece at the SITE Santa Fe auditorium on July 29. It's part of SITE Santa Fe's group exhibition *Going with the Flow: Art, Actions, and Western Waters*, which explores the integral role of water in the drought-stricken Southwest, through July.

"If the river wasn't there, I don't know if Albuquerque would be there," says Marisa Demarco, a collaborator on the audio installation. "It's sustaining us all, and it's how and why we live here. What issue could be more important for New Mexico, overall, than water?"

The deeply conceptual show, co-curated by SITE's head curator Brandee Caoba and Galisteo–based art historian Lucy R. Lippard, is not just SITE-specific; it creatively branches into environments beyond Railyard Park and the museum walls. At three spots along the river running through the city, Basia Irland's whimsical *Santa Fe River Contemplation Stations* are temporary thrones made with undulating desert willow, elm, and tamarisk branches. They invite river walkers to sit a spell and admire the heavier-than-usual current from this year's snowpack.

Chacón-based photographer Sharon Stewart's atmospheric survey of featured images examines the annual life cycles of a Pecos River–fed acequia over the past 30 years. "Acequias speak to the importance of living with the rhythms of nature," she says. "People have to work together, despite their differences, to ensure that water is delivered to their fields and to their livestock. We can use that as a model for our divisive times." Beside the older photographs, her new series, *Firescapes*, reveals the devastation wrought upon the waterways by the Hermit's Peak/Calf Canyon Fire, as well as continuing efforts to repair and revive the ecosystem.

That northern New Mexico community spirit is showcased in a much more uplifting off-site feature of *Going with the Flow*. On June 24, Stewart invites visitors to join a daylong celebration of the elements. *Blessings of Life: Water and Land,* in Mora, includes a blessing of the waters, a procession from the acequia to the high school, readings, performances, lectures, a seed exchange, an art show, and refreshments. By sunset, the day's cool confluence of nature and culture should inspire a free-flowing hope for a more sustainable future.



From top: A view from *El Agua Es la Vida*, Sharon Stewart's ongoing series. Basia Irland's *Santa Fe River Contemplation Station.*

SHARON STEWART, BASIA IRLAND (PHOTO BY SHAYLA BLATCHFORD), COURTESY OF THE ARTISTS AND SITE SANTA FE

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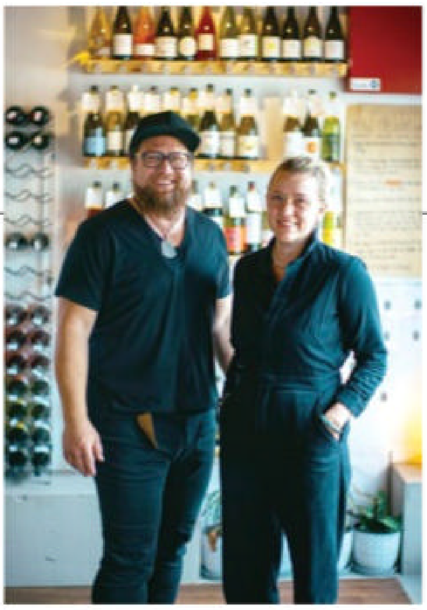


From left: Balkan-style handmade sausage with sweet peppers and tomato condiment. Zakary Pelaccio and Jori Jayne Emde brought natural wine—and a creative menu—to New Mexico.

Alchemy in Taos

The Corner Office is bringing natural wine and supernatural flavors to northern New Mexico.

By Molly Boyle

Their wine cellar had dwindled to its last case. According to Taos restaurateurs Jori Jayne Emde and Zakary Pelaccio, that's what spurred them to open New Mexico's very first natural wine bar.

The James Beard Award-winning couple had finally realized their dream of moving to northern New Mexico full-time, but it was taking a while to figure out their next venture. Most recently, they'd helmed Fish & Game, in Hudson, New York, a destination restaurant that *Wine Spectator* singled out as having one of the top 50 wine lists in the country for five straight years. They were particularly hooked on natural wine, which is produced organically, using a simple process with few or no additives. "We were like, 'We gotta get more wines that we want to be drinking,' " Emde recalls about their scant personal inventory in Taos. " 'We can do a wine bar.' "

The Corner Office, a stylish new vinoteca situated less than a block from Taos Plaza, has much more in store than a fascinating list of 101 wines, many of which are exclusive to the restaurant. Pelaccio's menu of small, shareable plates is also importing novel flavors to the old town.

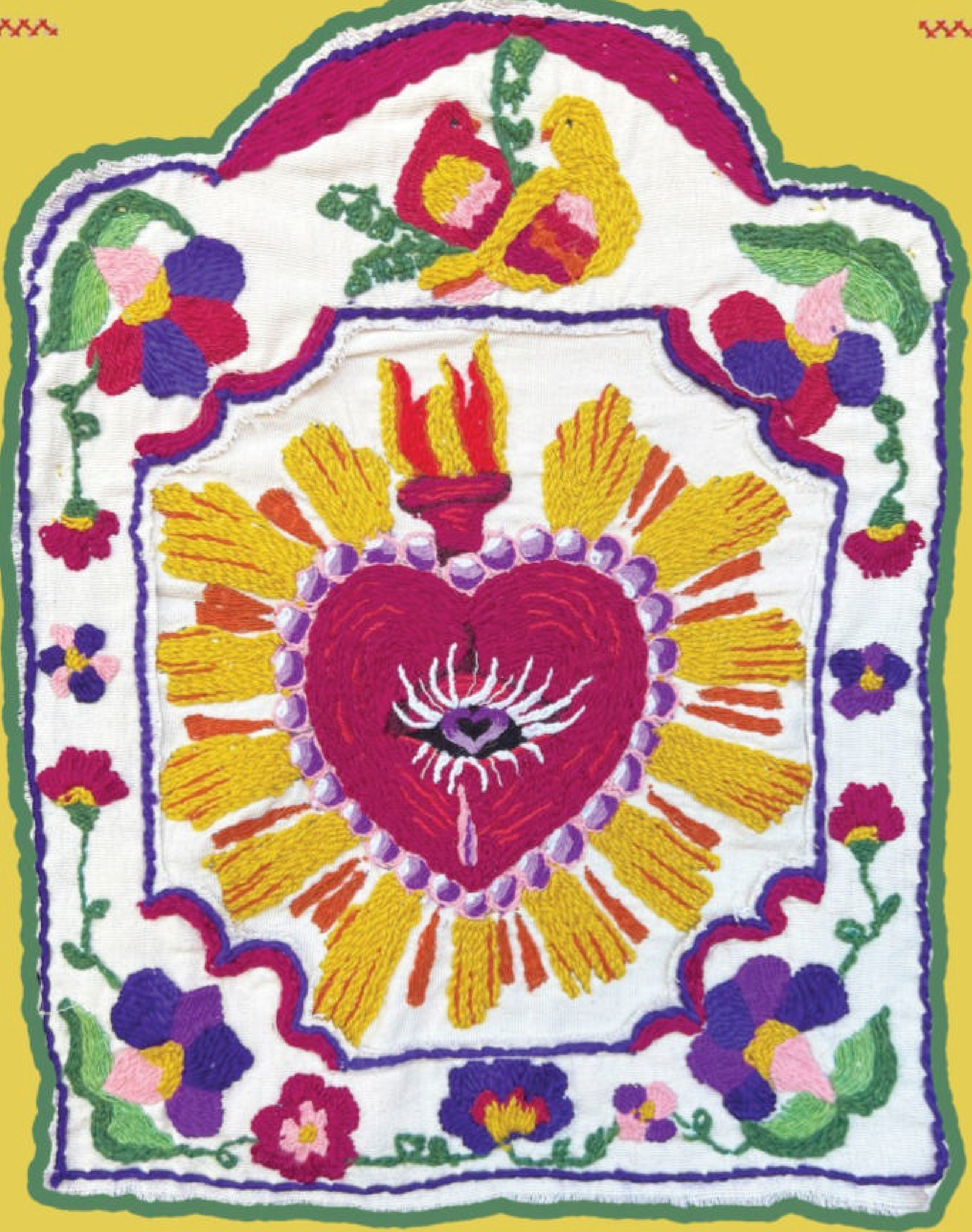
"Our sardine toast is what got us through the pandemic," says Pelaccio. He layers French fromagier Rodolphe Le Meunier's creamy beurre de baratte with cured sardines from Galicia, Spain, for the hefty $14 plate, which has become the menu's greatest hit. "We cook through our own filter," he explains, citing "European technique and Southeast Asian understanding." He also praises the virtues of local foods like chicos and the chokecherry jam the Corner Office serves with bone marrow.

Other offerings are mostly seasonally focused, though the menu regularly features a beautifully charred green cabbage wedge with beet tahini, scallions, wild sumac, and a sesame-chile crisp. Pair it with a bottle of the 2021 Quinta da Palmirinha Vinho Branco from Portugal, which the wine list describes as having a "flinty backbone with honeycomb aftertaste," to fully realize the delicious wizardry Emde and Pelaccio have brought to town.

"It was coming, no matter what," Emde says of the boom in natural wine over the past few years. "If we didn't do it in New Mexico, somebody else would have." For more than a decade, she has also taught fermentation classes, and plans to further funk up the Corner Office menu with her concoctions. "We like products that have a story and connect to the earth—and that includes wine. What we're drinking is just essential to us."

CORNER OFFICE
122 Paseo del Pueblo Sur Suite C, Taos; **cornerofficetaos.com**

DIGGY LLOYD, MIKE HAWKINS



Yvonne Vanessa Zamora Vazquez, Colcha, "Ojo de Dios"

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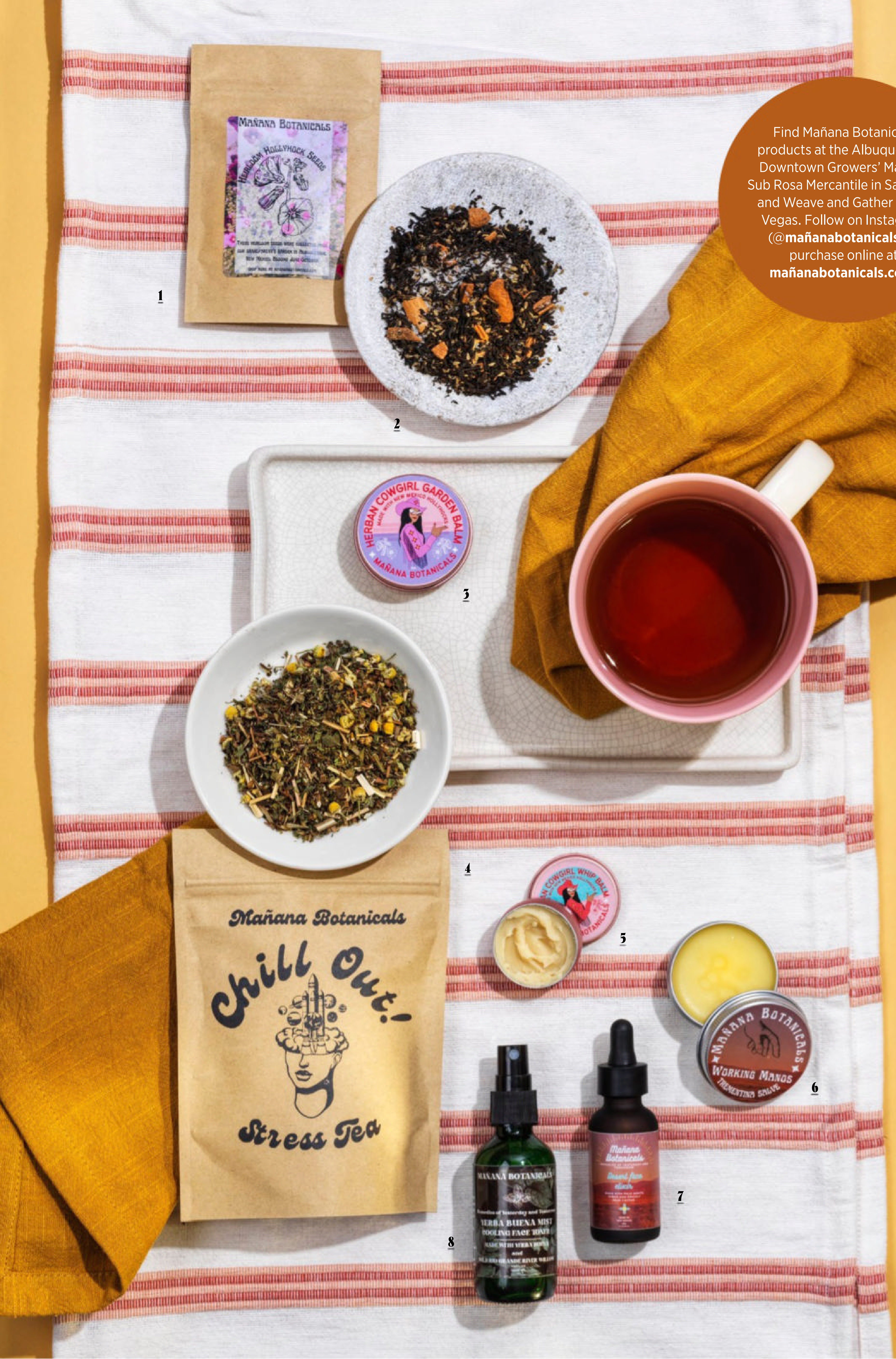
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3 Herban Cowgirl Garden Balm, $12
4 Chill Out! Stress Tea, $12
5 Herban Cowgirl Whip Balm, $10
6 Working Manos Trementina Salve, $12
7 Desert Face Elixir, $50
8 Yerba Buena Face Mist, $16

In Bloom

Mañana Botanicals honors ancient wisdom with foraged ingredients. *By Lanee Lee*

Sarah Yocum has her grandmother Kathy Tapia's garden to thank for Mañana Botanicals. "All the hollyhocks in our products are sourced right from her backyard," says Yocum, an Albuquerque native and the founder of the handmade skin-care line, launched in 2021.

Rooted in New Mexico's traditional plant medicine, or remedios, Yocum's balms, elixirs, salves, mists, and teas feature foraged ingredients like her abuela's hollyhocks, as well as cota, brook mint, piñon, yerba buena, and willow.

Yocum took online classes from the Chestnut School of Herbal Medicine, in North Carolina, and trained at the Herb Store, in Albuquerque, but the remedios ethos was in her DNA—literally. Her great-great-grandmother was a curandera, a healer who uses plant medicine. Once the pandemic hit, Yocum tapped into her calling and began Mañana.

"My grandparents take me to all their secret piñon tree spots, where they would harvest when they were younger," says Yocum. She also seeks out ingredients along the Río Grande bosque and in the mountains of northern New Mexico "to connect with the earth and set peaceful intentions" in her products.

The Herban Cowgirl Garden Balm, a customer favorite with a fun illustration of Yocum in a hot-pink Western outfit on the tin, helps keep hands and cuticles soft in New Mexico's dry climate. For summer, Yocum has created Greñas (Spanish for "tangles," and her family's nickname for crazy hair), a hair oil made from globemallow flowers that promotes hair growth. "I'm preserving knowledge of the past while modernizing remedios for the future," she says.

Photograph by **INGA HENDRICKSON**

Jackson Hagin McCaw, People's Mercantile, 1923

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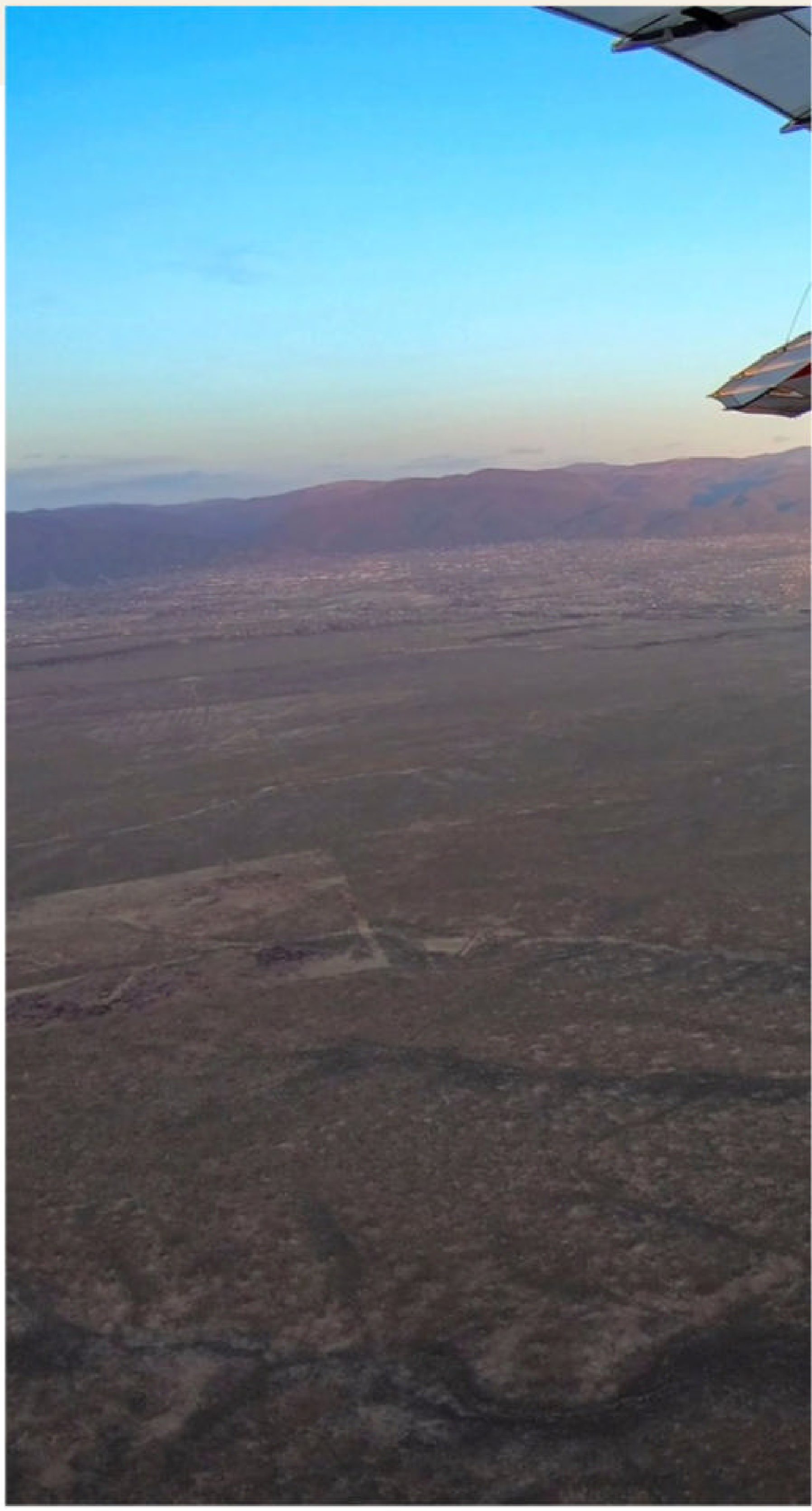
Flight Path

A near-death experience gave a Taos photographer a fresh lease on life and a new way of experiencing—and loving—New Mexico. **BY JIM O'DONNELL**



CHRIS DAHL-BREDINE

CHRIS DAHL-BREDINE CHASES THE LIGHT. "I'm moved by sunrises and sunsets," he says. "There's nothing quite like the beautiful New Mexico light, and I just want to be right there in it." Flying high in his modified two-seat ultralight trike, the 54-year-old Taos resident seeks connection with the landscape below. "When the whole Earth is spread out before you, you can't help but feel part of something bigger than yourself. New Mexico is one of those places that moves you to feel the world in your whole body. When I see that thing that moves me, that is what I want to photograph." In 1999, during the final week of the ski season at Taos Ski Valley, Dahl-Bredine climbed Kachina Peak, seeking the last best run of the year. He was about 60 feet above the cliff when the side of the mountain fell away. "I started sliding; the snow swallowed me," he says. "There was nothing I could do." Nothing, that is, except reach for something far larger.

THERE WERE SEVEN KIDS in my family. My parents weren't particularly career-oriented. They saw work as something you do either because you love it or because it's good for the planet.

WE WERE BROUGHT UP to be free-thinkers—hiking, backpacking, just being on the land. We were brought up to see options and opportunities everywhere.

I REMEMBER THE SNOW up to my armpits. I remember trying to grab a tree, but I went over the cliff. I was tumbling head over heels, and I thought, *This is it. I'm done.*

I BLACKED OUT. When I came to, I was half buried but alive. I'd been totally thrown out of my body.

MY SPINE AND WRISTS WERE FRACTURED, but I didn't need surgery. While I was recovering, I realized that life can end at any moment, so I resolved to do everything I wanted with whatever I had left of this life.

I ALWAYS WANTED TO FLY. Once I recovered, I started looking around. I checked out hang gliding, but it wasn't quite right. I found a school in Arizona that taught ultralight.

IT WASN'T EASY. I got into it, but flying was rough. I didn't like the turbulence.

ONCE I FIGURED OUT that you could avoid all that turbulence by taking off at dawn and catching that early gentle air, I decided that this was my life.

IT'S FUNNY. When I'm on a cliff, I'm more nervous than when I'm flying. Once I'm up there, I go beyond, and I just don't worry about anything anymore.

IN 2002, I was flying, but I wasn't so into photography. I'd taken some classes, but it really didn't mean that much to me.

BUT YOU KNOW, I get up there at 5 a.m. and that first light … oh, I was blown away.

I GOT A LITTLE POINT-AND-SHOOT. Digital

Chris Dahl-Bredine pilots his modified two-seat ultralight trike over the Río Grande Gorge, near Taos.

at that time couldn't get me what I wanted, so I stuck with film for many years. Little by little, I learned, got better equipment, and learned more.

WHEN THE WHOLE EARTH IS BELOW, you realize it *is* you, that you are a part of it and it is a part of you.

WATER IS BIG FOR ME. I love to run the river. I got a pack raft recently, so now I can fly with my boat and get to some special places no one else can reach.

WHAT'S NEW TO ME is my cinematic camera. I can put it on my trike, take off, and get a high-quality cinematic video, the kind I've always imagined.

THE THING ABOUT FLYING is that it takes you out of your thinking mind and puts you into your feeling body. When your mind stops thinking, you know you're in touch with something bigger. NM

LOCATION

Hitting Pay Dirt

Long known as a hot spot for boaters, anglers, and lake lovers, Elephant Butte is making a splash as a destination for off-road enthusiasts and other adventure seekers. **By Jennifer C. Olson**

Photographs by **STEFAN WACHS**

FOUNDED	POPLULATION	STATE PARK TRAILS	LAKE SIZE
1998 AD	1,580 PEOPLE	15 MILES	10,920 ACRES

A popular off-road trail takes vehicles through Palomas Gap, as Caballo Lake and farms in the valley form the backdrop of the ascent.

Elephant Butte Lake gets its name from the distinctive rock formation that was once the core of an ancient volcano. It now forms an island in the reservoir.

PRICKLY PEAR CACTUS CLINGS TO the mountainside overhanging the two-track road. So when the passenger-side wheels of our Polaris RZR jump a ledge, we teeter left, bringing my driver's face dangerously close to the spiny pads. Climbing the road burned into a natural shelf, the two-seat off-road vehicle's tires grip sharply chunked rock while the suspension absorbs bigger protrusions. Still, I look ahead rather than into the gorge on my right and notice that nearly all the contours of the Caballo Mountains are textured with visible rock layers and divided by flood-carved chasms.

“That slab was the size of an ice chest!” one of our companions exclaims, high-fiving my driver, Edna Trager, once she putters to the end of the shelf road. From the passenger seat, I see her smile in response.

We only pause briefly before tipping downhill through Palomas Gap—the hum of 1,000 horsepower turning to the squeal of dusty brakes—traversing the rangeland east of the Caballos and rumbling to the summit of Timber Mountain.

New Mexico's largest lake shines blue while clouds cast shadows over the desert 3,400 feet below us. The Río Grande curves around the 32-mile-long range we just bisected in our OHVs. Surrounded by communications towers, we soak in 360-degree views of the Río Grande Valley, Jornada del Muerto, and San Andres Mountains. Taking advantage of the elevation, we also locate the tiny haven of Elephant Butte—best known as home of the 40,000-acre Elephant Butte Lake State Park. “Lots of people know about our lake but don't realize there's a city here, too,” says Trager, who has held elected offices in the town since 2015.

> **“Lots of people know about our lake but don't realize there's a city here, too,” says Elephant Butte city council member Edna Trager.**

A destination for recreational boating almost since the completion of Engle Dam created the then-largest reservoir in the world in 1916, the city is afloat in watercraft

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Clockwise from left: Edna Trager co-owns Zia Kayak. Charlie Warren runs his side-by-side over rough terrain. Sierra del Rio Golf Course offers plenty of challenges.

dealerships and rental operations, bait and tackle shops, and fishing guide services. But thanks to organizations like Friends of Elephant Butte Lake State Park and the New Mexico Off Highway Vehicle Alliance, the town of less than 1,600 residents is pushing to diversify its outdoor recreation opportunities for hiking, biking, and driving all types of off-road vehicles while capitalizing on its historic charm, award-winning golf course, and nearby public lands.

Building on the region's strengths means involving the U.S. Bureau of Land Management to improve how trails are mapped and marked while working closely with the New Mexico Department of Game and Fish to promote responsible recreation. Allies are also lobbying at the state level to conduct studies on OHV recreation and change the laws about which roads can be legally used by off-highway vehicles.

"The New Mexico Outdoor Recreation Division was dismissing OHVs," says Roger Pattison, one of my guides. "They're coming back around because they're realizing what an [economic] impact it is."

I GREW UP TUBING BEHIND A MOTORBOAT on Elephant Butte Lake and watching the state park's Independence Day Fireworks Extravaganza from a houseboat's top deck. More recently, I've let my daughter dig in its natural sand beach and toted her around its shallowest coves on our stand-up paddleboard. But I'm just now exploring the area's attractions found on dry land.

Pattison was initially drawn here in 2013 for the nonprofit New Mexico Off Highway Vehicle Alliance's Rubber Chicken Ride for dual-sport motorcyclists. Having worked

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Clockwise from top left: Even the sunsets are a catch on Elephant Butte Lake. Roger Pattison sits astride his adventure bike. The lake draws anglers of all ages for its bass, walleye, catfish, crappie, and stripers.

to repair the reputation of OHVers after bad actors wrecked cultural sites and trespassed habitually, NMOHVA is now demonstrating that off-highway recreation can be a healthy activity and is working with land managers to harness grants for trail maintenance and infrastructure.

"I fell in love with the remote terrain," admits Pattison, who moved to Elephant Butte from northern New Mexico for year-round riding and even opened a short-lived OHV rental operation in 2021.

He starts the introduction to Elephant Butte's off-road scene at the municipal offices, where he has gathered Trager and Charlie Warren, a Friends of Elephant Butte Lake State Park board member. "This town has a history of recreation-based economy and saw the new popularity of OHVs as an opportunity," Pattison says. In fact, while the town was only incorporated in 1998, it was among the first municipalities in the state to permit OHVs within city limits.

"Elephant Butte is unique because it's adjacent to public land," he says. "Off-roaders can legally park in town, unload their vehicle, drive to BLM land, and ride for days or weeks without running out of new trails."

Word spread faster than a lead-footed driver. In February 2021, the Elks Club promoted a breakfast ride-in and cooked for 120. "When 500 OHVers came through, everyone realized how popular the area had become for riding," he says.

Pattison points to a gravel lot across the street. The property is designated as an OHV trailhead and training area, where drivers can leave their trailers and dry camp and eventually learn technical skills, safety practices, and the rules of responsible trail riding. Elephant Butte is working to designate BLM access points, assign in-town trailheads, and identify connecting routes, ultimately producing a map. Until then, many depend on Polaris's Ride Command app, which displays a curated set of legal trails. One rule of thumb is to stay on existing roads.

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FOUR DIAMOND
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Clockwise from top left: Ernie Armijo and Jacob Benitez pose with their rock crawlers. Elephant Butte's off-road trails wind through Palomas Gap. After a day on the trail, hit Bigfoot Restaurant for its Pub Fish & Shrimp.

MAKE WAVES

Stay. With 173 developed campsites, **Elephant Butte Lake State Park** also allows primitive beach camping. Just outside the park entrance is the **Marina Suites Motel** and the nearby **Elephant Butte Lake RV Resort**'s 140 full hookup sites. Built by the Civilian Conservation Corps, the historic **Dam Site** on the Bureau of Reclamation side of the reservoir features a campground, hotel, RV park, and 1940s casitas near **Lago Rico marina**.

Refresh. Sip cocktails crafted with New Mexico spirits around the firepit at **Bigfoot Restaurant**. Spend sunset on the deck of **Turtleback Taphouse and Grill**. At **Casa Taco**, savor hand-pressed, fresh masa tortillas, deep-fried and stuffed with pork adovada.

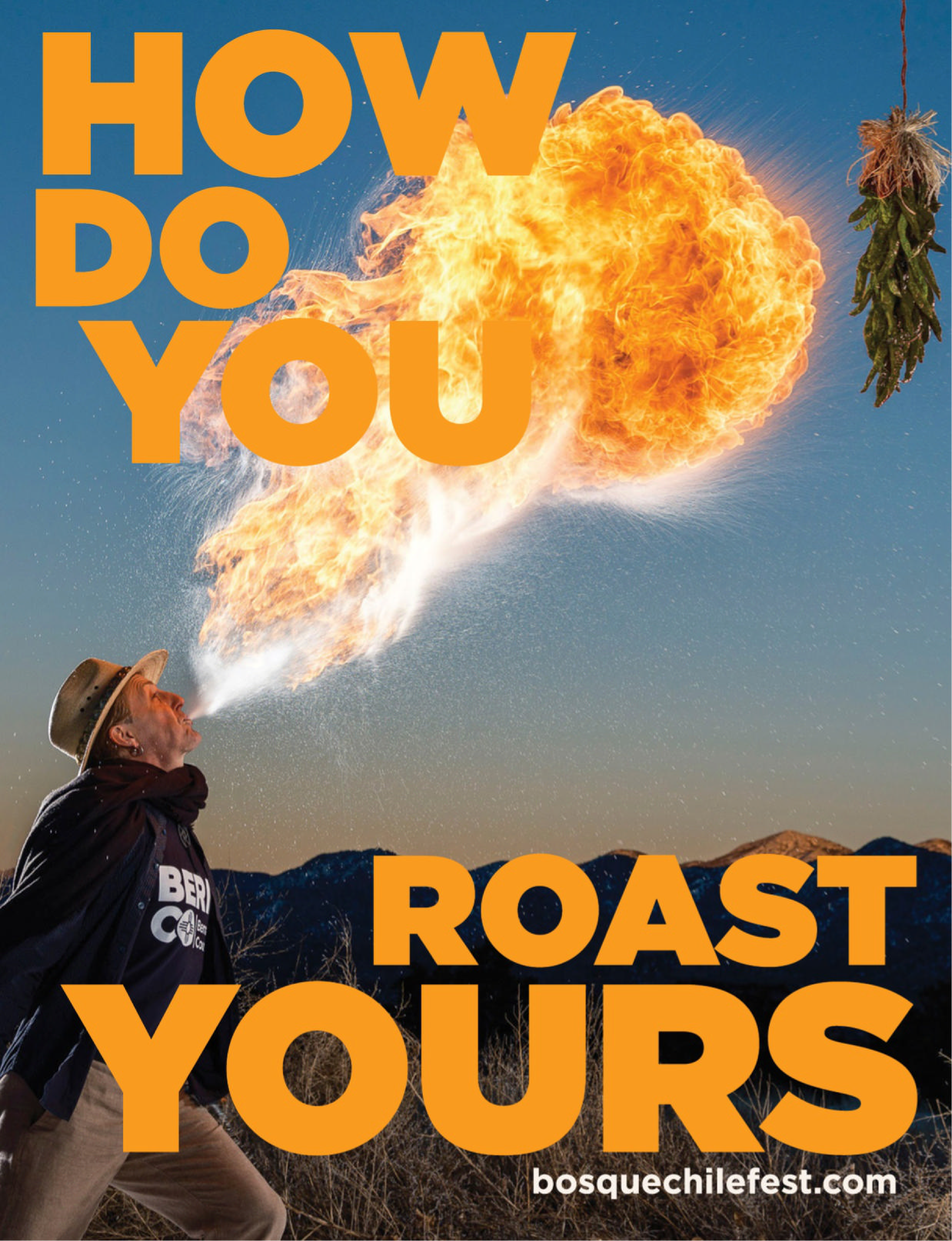
Explore. Polaris RZR rentals from **T or C Guided Tours** are equipped with the Ride Command app, a rearview camera, squishy suspension, and an SOS button. Buy or rent paddling gear from **Zia Kayak**. **Marina del Sur** is the place to rent pontoons. By appointment, **Capt D's JetSkis** offers full- and half-day rentals. Book a guided fishing trip with **Land of Enchantment Fishing & Hunting Adventures** or **T3 Adventures**, which partners with nonprofit Operation Phoenix Outdoors to get veterans, active-duty service people, and first responders into nature. Charter a fully rigged boat from **Bent Rod's Guide Services**. Hike the 1.5-mile **Luchini Trail** in Elephant Butte Lake State Park. The city's multiuse path connects with state park trails and is designated as part of the **Rio Grande Trail**. **Morning Star Outfitters**, in T or C, offers e-bike and mountain bike rentals.

Planning our route, the group decides to hit the dirt at Turtleback Avenue near a popular put-in for float trips, finish at "the rock"—a 40-degree incline along a 20-foot stretch of slick rock that makes it feel like a 70-degree slope—and return to Elephant Butte. After driving parallel to the river for a while, we cross into a BLM tract, turn east, and stop at the top of sand dunes. These unnamed, unmapped steeps at the base of Turtleback Mountain challenge daring OHV drivers as well as runners in the 50K Desert Ultra.

Steering south, we come upon a caravan of Jeeps led by Las Cruces Four Wheel Drive Club member Ernie Armijo, who hails from Las Palomas, about 12 miles south of Elephant Butte. Today, he's in a stock Jeep Cherokee. As the club's extreme- and hard-trail coordinator, Armijo leads more technical rides in his crawler. He also maintains BLM trails and practices good etiquette, like letting our RZRs pass.

"These mountains never get old," he says. "The area has such a wide range of trails, from mild to wild."

BIKES—BOTH PEDAL-POWERED AND motorized—are even more nimble than side-by-sides. Pattison guided 100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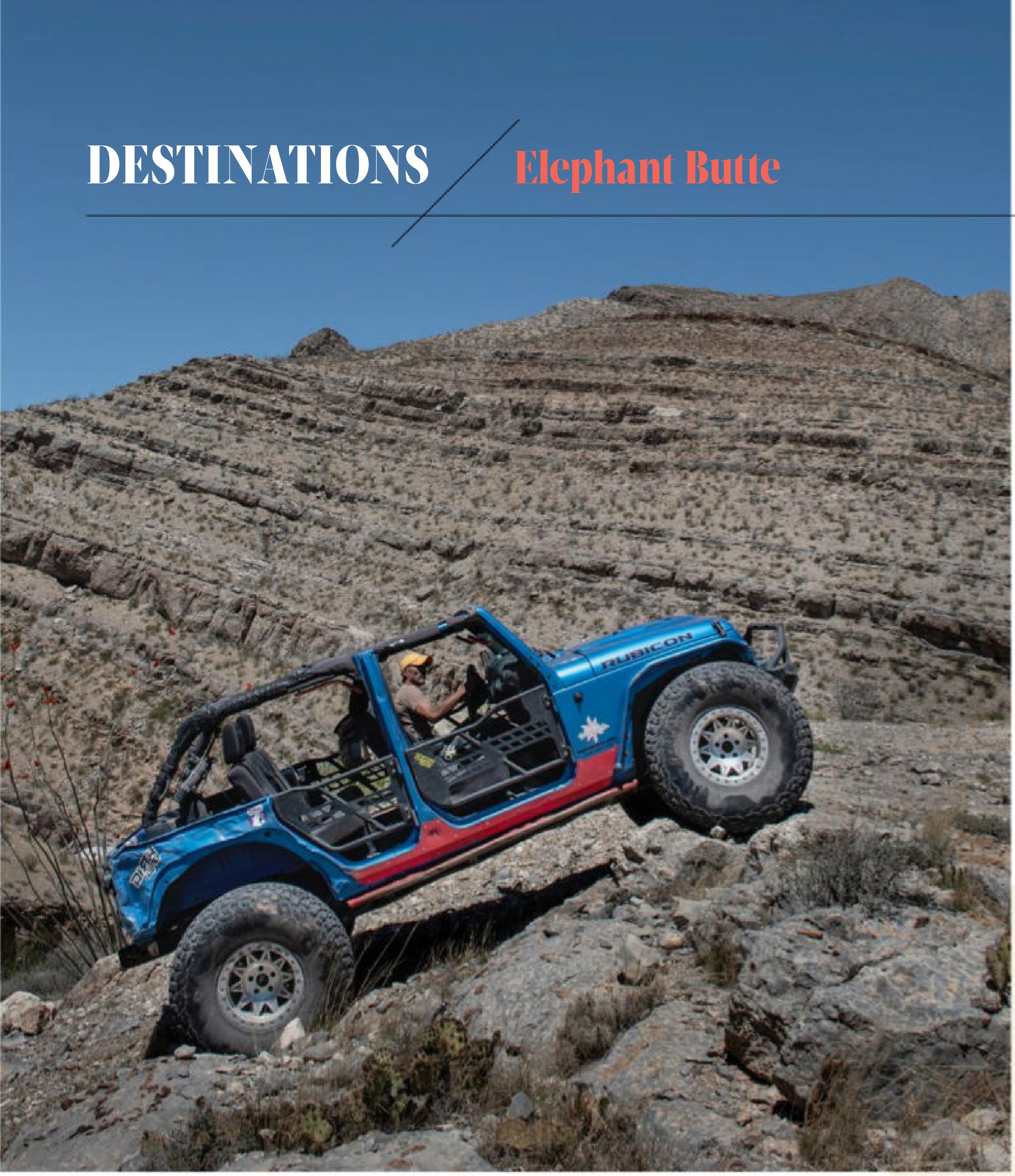

BIGFOOT
Restaurant
212

From left: Jacob Benitez tackles a tough incline in his Jeep. The 10-foot-tall Sasquatch makes it hard to miss Bigfoot Restaurant.

adventure bikers through Elephant Butte's terrain during the Backcountry Discovery Route season kickoff ride this past spring. Designed for the fastest-growing segment of motorcyclists, the 80 percent dirt route begins in Dell City, Texas, and winds more than 1,200 miles through Carrizozo, Elephant Butte, the Gila National Forest, Cuba, Abiquiú, and eventually into Colorado.

"One focus is creating similar connective routes that are legally usable in side-by-sides, which aren't allowed on most state highways," Pattison says.

Trager, who co-owns Zia Kayak and sits on the board of endeavOR, the state's outdoor recreation business alliance, understands the value of the outdoors in a deeply personal way. Having lived in California for almost four decades, she confesses that she was drawn back to her home state after one particularly stressful experience in Burbank traffic. Being behind the wheel of an OHV in Elephant Butte hits different than navigating a West Coast interstate.

While we ride, she even clues me into one of her favorite fishing spots: Ash Canyon. Not far from that sleepy cove, the trail bends vertically, but Trager barely hits the brakes on our side-by-side. Warren and Pattison watch as she coolly sends "the rock" and its treacherous slope.

Over a Chupacabra Burger at Bigfoot Restaurant and drinks from Truth or Consequences Brewing, Trager invites me back to Elephant Butte for the holiday favorite Luminaria Beachwalk, Warren introduces me to his better half, and Pattison urges me to get in the driver's seat next time.

"If you can drive a car, you can drive one of these vehicles," Pattison says. "If it looks scary to you, don't do it."

Jennifer C. Olson *is featured in "Storytellers," page 14.*

MARK YOUR CALENDARS

Elephant Butte Lake State Park has planned the **Independence Day Fireworks Extravaganza** for July 1 and offers regular **boating safety courses**.

Take to the skies at the **Elephant Butte Balloon Regatta** August 4–6.

The New Mexico Off Highway Vehicle Alliance is working to restart its annual **Rubber Chicken Ride** this October.

Join a group 4x4 ride October 11–14 during the 32nd annual **Chile Challenge**, hosted by the Las Cruces Four-Wheel Drive Club, which also publishes local trail maps at **lascrucesfourwheeldrive club.com**.

Run the foothills of the Caballo Mountains in the Truth or Consequences **Desert Ultra** October 28.

Start the holidays magically with the **Elephant Butte Luminaria Beachwalk** December 9.

Zia Kayak's **Kayak Fishing Tournament** enters its 10th year in May 2024.

Each day comes bearing gifts.
Untie the ribbon.
~Ann Ruth Schabacker

Happy 100th New Mexico Magazine!

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WHY WE LOVE NEW

TO CELEBRATE OUR 100TH ANNIVERSARY, WE ASKED WRITERS, ARTISTS, RANCHERS, CHEFS, HISTORIANS, ARCHAEOLOGISTS, BALLOON PILOTS, AND EVERYDAY NEW MEXICANS TO COUNT THE WAYS.

EDITED BY MOLLY BOYLE
AND STEVE GLEYDURA

Stories by Molly Boyle, Marie Romero Cash, Lynn Cline, Philip Connors, Stanley Crawford, Tracy Dingmann, Julian Dossett, Karen Fischer, Gregory R.C. Hasman, Lanee Lee, Jennifer Levin, Maria Manuela, Rob Martínez, Jennifer C. Olson, Carmella Padilla, Lesley Poling-Kempes, Levi Romero, Luci Tapahonso, and Don J. Usner

MEXICO

▲ Mills Canyon Road heads into the Kiowa National Grassland, in northeastern New Mexico.

ANDREW KORNYLAK

OUR DIRT ROADS GO EVERYWHERE

For this author and historian, New Mexico's back roads always lead to untold rewards.

BY LESLEY POLING-KEMPES

I love dirt roads for all the usual reasons: the chance they offer to go into and through pristine wilderness, over mountains and through canyons, across rims and ridges where we are immersed in landscapes of silence and beauty. I love dirt roads for the stories they tell, too. And they always have a story. These roads—and the foot, horse, and wagon trails they follow—always tell tales of people and place.

New Mexico has 25,000 miles of unpaved roads. Dirt, sand, clay, stone, and caliche constitute up to 75 percent of our roads.

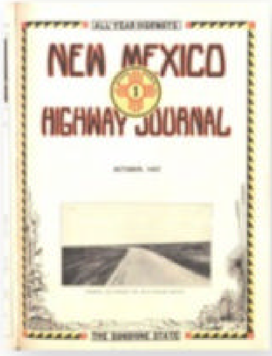
I had my first trip on a bumpy New Mexico road in the 1960s, when I came with my family to Ghost Ranch. Driving across the high desert north of Abiquiú, the family station wagon left the asphalt two-laner for a dirt road marked by a sign with a line drawing of a cow skull. (The iconic skull logo was drawn by Georgia O'Keeffe and given to the ranch owner in the 1930s.) The narrow road wound away into foothills and onto red and yellow badlands that ended under sky-scraping vermilion cliffs. To my child's heart and mind, that route led out of the land of the ordinary and into the country of the extraordinary.

Leaning out the car window, I took in this new world one slow, jostling quarter mile at a time. The deeper we moved into that light- and time-carved land, the more I sensed I was coming home to a place where this country's stories, known and unknown, became personal, became my story.

After I graduated from college in the spring of 1976, I moved to Abiquiú. I have lived at the end of a dirt road ever since. All my knowledge of my adopted home country is connected by unimproved dirt roads that reach from here to a distant there. The roads less traveled take me into the long ago, to ancient ruins and secret water sources, to cliff dwellings, caves, and hideouts, to stories carved across rock walls, to cow

ON THE COVER

October 1927



The Federal Aid Project No. 162-A ran through Chaves County.

camps, abandoned homesteads, even entire villages where fruit-bearing orchards stand witness to a once thriving community.

In the fall of 1983, an 86-year-old woman took me on an adventure in the high plains of eastern New Mexico. I was in Springer, interviewing Helen Whitnell Gillespie about her long since deceased mother-in-law, Minnie O'Neal Gillespie. Kansas-born Minnie came to Ratón to work as a Harvey Girl at the Harvey House in the 1880s. She married a ranch hand with whom she raised six sons, one of whom was Helen's husband.

Minnie's story became the earliest primary account included in my book *The Harvey Girls*. But just as memorable as unearthing details of a 19th-century Harvey Girl was the expedition Helen insisted we take that October day. Over several dirt roads, we drove to the abandoned Dorsey Mansion, where Minnie worked between her year at the Harvey House and her marriage to a cowboy. I was not familiar with the infamous Arkansas senator Stephen W. Dorsey or the supposedly haunted Gothic Victorian mansion he built in 1878. But Helen wanted me to see it. More importantly, she wanted to return to the place where her family story began.

Today, the route to Dorsey Mansion (listed on the National Register of Historic Places but now privately owned) is mostly paved and well marked by signs that offer reassurances to drivers heading into the proverbial middle of nowhere. That "nowhere" is the beginning of the Great Plains, a country that is, to quote O'Keeffe, "more sky than earth," marked by windmills, barbed wire, dry water holes, and the unbroken line of the horizon in all directions.

In 1983, the route was unmarked. After we departed the two-laner east of Springer, we journeyed across roads etched into a map in Helen's head. One section shadowed a portion of the Santa Fe Trail. In a time of no GPS, with no signs or landmarks, our safe passage depended on a Toyota sedan, a full-enough tank of gas, and Helen's memory.

The boarded-up 36-room, two-story, gargoyle-guarded Dorsey Mansion, made of log and stone, was indeed a destination worthy of the adventure to find it. But the real treasure of that day was Helen—and her stories of a long-ago place that came to splendid life while we drove under the wide New Mexico sky.

I began to understand, on that journey across the grasslands of northeastern New Mexico, how taking the roads less traveled can lead to remarkable places and people. I hope that our dirt roads and our stories will continue to intertwine and persist in this land of enchantment for many years to come.

Lesley Poling-Kempes *has written several books about the Southwest. She began her writing career in 1976 as an intern at* New Mexico Magazine.

▼ Hot-air balloon festivals can be found in Albuquerque, Gallup, Angel Fire, and elsewhere.

NMTD

OUR BALLOONS LIFT YOUR SPIRIT

"New Mexico offers a wide variety of scenic beauty, whether it's high-desert terrain, beautiful lush forests, wide-open spaces, or the friendly landowners who are willing to share their land for us to land on. That, combined with weather patterns that are very favorable for flying, makes our state one of the best for hot-air ballooning."

—BILL LEE, OWNER OF X-TREME-LEE FUN BALLOON ADVENTURES, IN GALLUP, AND MEMBER OF THE RED ROCK BALLOON RALLY ASSOCIATION

OUR WEATHER CH-CH-CHANGES

Former KOB 4 weatherman Steve Stucker finds joy in our four seasons, blue skies, and variety of microclimates—even if they can make for tricky predicting.

New Mexico's weather creates microclimates everywhere, which makes weather forecasting tricky. After 33 years as a weatherman on KOB 4, Steve Stucker spent his last morning in front of a green screen on March 31. Originally from Iowa, Stucker began his career here on the radio before joining the Albuquerque station in May 1990. His decades of morning forecasting have given him a deep understanding of New Mexico's unique weather patterns. Now that he has a bit more time, you might find him working with Beds4Kidz, the nonprofit he founded 10 years ago, or cruising down a highway stretch on his Harley-Davidson Electra Glide Ultra Classic on a summer day. *—As told to Julian Dossett*

JAY HEMPHILL

Our state is so big. If you prefer cooler weather—an hour and a half, two hours, you're there. If you prefer to be in the desert, you just hop on the interstate; in a couple of hours you're in Las Cruces or White Sands National Park.

All of my 40 years have been either in Santa Fe or Albuquerque, but I traveled the rest of the state, and there are variances everywhere. We go from deserts to high deserts to mountaintops and valleys and everything in between. So the weather is very, very different.

We are a very temperate climate. But we really do get four seasons, and not a lot of places as warm as we are can claim that. I swear that we have a blue sky unlike any other place in the United States. When we have our perfectly clear sky, it's a blue that I just don't recognize anywhere else.

◀ At just under 6,000 feet, Silver City's elevation helps moderate its temperatures in the summer.

Summertime is by far my favorite season. I love the hot days and the cooler evenings. It's amazing how, with our higher elevation and our low humidity, we can sizzle at 90 to 100 degrees at six o'clock, and by seven thirty to eight o'clock we've cooled down into the sixties. I just hate to see it go at the end of every August. But then fall comes in and I'm like, *What was I complaining about?* Fall is spectacular.

Life itself has seasons. Sometimes they're very difficult seasons. We go through hard times—it might be physical, financial, spiritual, or emotional. But if we keep an even keel, keep moving forward, and do what we say we believe in doing, then, almost invariably, it comes back around again.

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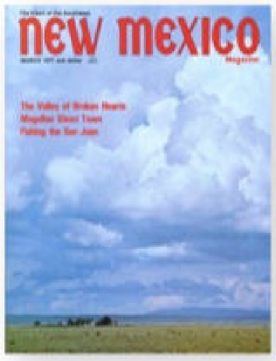


ON THE COVER

March 1977

Fred Stimson photographed what some called the "Valley of Broken Hearts" for a story by John L. Sinclair.

HOT TOPICS

Retired KOB 4 weatherman Steve Stucker talks about some of his favorite elements of our weather.

Monsoons. "Living here taught me that monsoon season doesn't mean flooding season—it means seasonal rains. It's really our lifeblood. Here in the land of high desert, the monsoon is generally a very, very good thing."

Night skies. "There is nothing that will ever erase my memories of taking my young daughters camping up in the Pecos Wilderness and just being stunned at the stars."

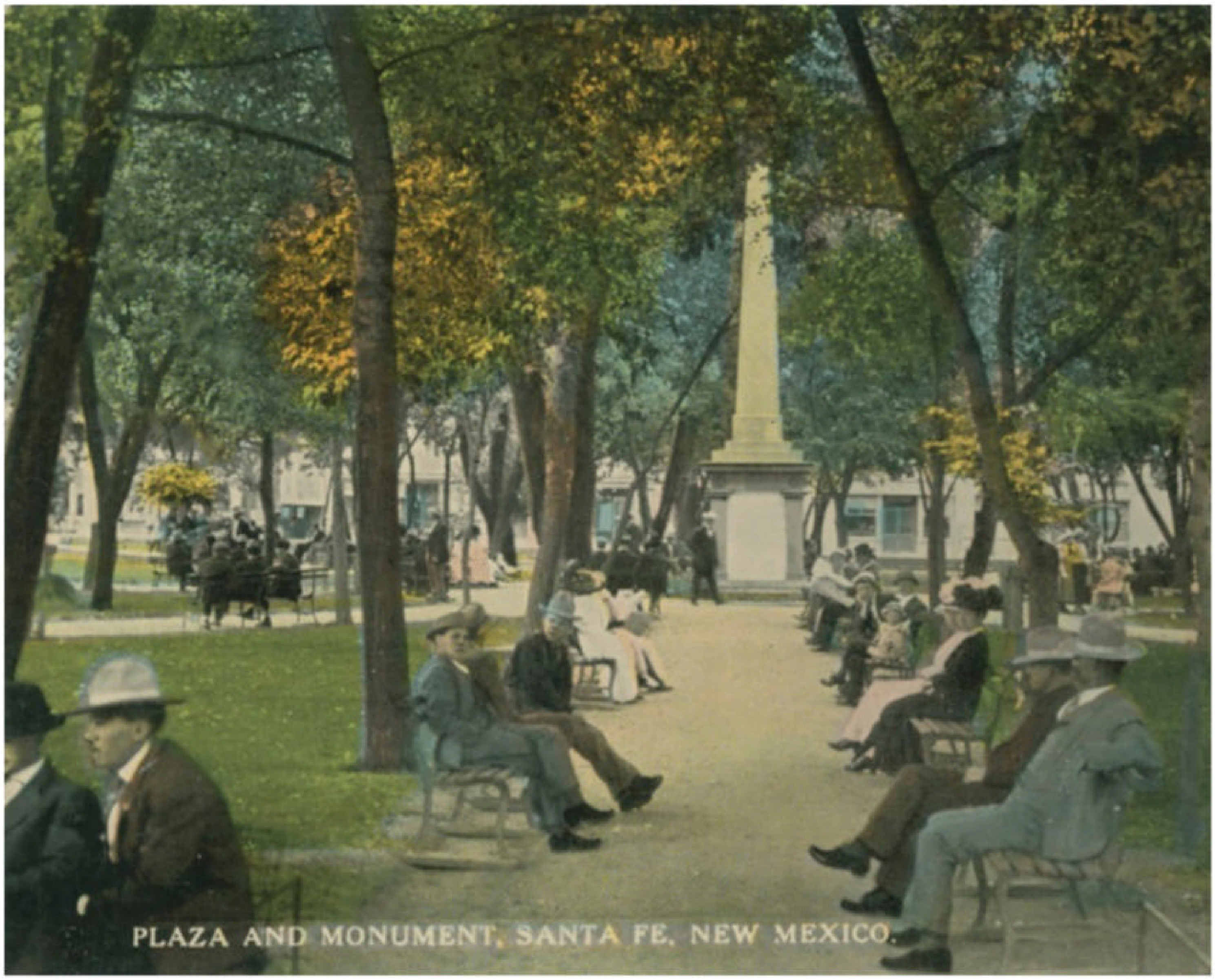
The Albuquerque Box. "It's a combination of our geography and our prevailing wind patterns. I think that's one of the reasons that the Albuquerque International Balloon Fiesta has become so gigantic and so spectacular. It's not available anyplace else on earth."

OUR SOPAIPILLAS ARE TO FRY FOR

> "At Napolito, we make our sopaipillas by hand. We have a lady who comes in every morning and makes the dough. Then we roll it out like a tortilla and fry it until it puffs up. We've been making them this way since 1964. People like to come in and have a sopaipilla with a cup of coffee. Many people like to have a sopaipilla after a meal, because it's something sweet but not too sweet."
>
> —VICTOR GALLEGOS, MANAGER OF NOPALITO RESTAURANT, THE LAS CRUCES EATERY OPENED BY HIS PARENTS IN 1964

▲ A drizzle of honey on a warm sopaipilla is a sweet reward any time of day.

FROM TOP: RAYCHEL SANNER/UNSPLASH, DOUGLAS MERRIAM



PALACE OF THE GOVERNORS PHOTO ARCHIVES, NEW MEXICO HISTORY MUSEUM, SANTA FE, JESSE NUSBAUM COLLECTION (#139151)

THE PAST IS PRESENT

Our rich, mysterious, and complex history carries lessons for today and makes us more prepared to take on the future.

BY ROB MARTÍNEZ

Growing up in Albuquerque, I heard a lot of stories about New Mexico. Some were about brujas, or witches, and others were about Los Hermanos Penitentes. Indita songs told of cautivas (Indian captives) and ciboleros (buffalo hunters). When my late father was growing up in Mora's high mountain valley, his mother warned, “Hay muchas brujas en Mora” (“There are many witches here in Mora”).

Those ideas were passed on to me and my siblings, along with tales of conflict between Apache warriors and the area's Hispano residents. Our great-great-grandfather Felipe Lovato and the other men of the Mora Valley confronted and clashed with other Native people over who would have access to that ancient mountain pass. These unfolding stories our elders gave us resonate and reveal a fascinating and complex historical past.

New Mexico history, like our land and people, is at once beautiful, mysterious, intoxicating, and sobering. The ancient remnants at Chaco Culture National Historical Park remind us that it was a thriving civilization at one time. The haunting emptiness also emphasizes that something catastrophic and life-changing happened that caused the Ancestral Puebloans to scatter and establish new communities along what is now the Río Grande watershed. New Mexico became the land of the pueblos.

Spanish civilization arrived in New Mexico in a dust storm of armor, horses, cattle, and diverse humanity from far-off lands such as Spain and the Valley of Mexico. Rooted in the Latin language of conquest imported to the Iberian Peninsula by Romans 1,700 years earlier, Spanish became a *lingua franca* in New Mexico and, along with the quipu and other Puebloan cultural tools, assisted in uniting the pueblos against the Spanish in 1680 when revolt erupted.

▲ The obelisk stood in Santa Fe Plaza for more than 150 years before protesters tore down the controversial monument in 2020.

◆

ON THE COVER

April 1934

Gerald Cassidy's *The Navajo Shepherdess* is one of our most iconic covers. It also graced the July 1997 issue.

After the Spaniards returned with a new attitude in the 1690s, the subsequent century witnessed a blending of Spanish (Catholic, Jewish, and Muslim), Portuguese, French, Mexican, Puebloan, Genízaro, Navajo (Diné), Apache, Comanche, Ute, and Kiowa peoples and cultures into a unique New Mexico society that, by 1800, had become something quite extraordinary: *nuevomexicano* culture. Such diverse cultures and perspectives are essential to what makes this state so special.

In the mid-1800s, American settlers, businessmen, and opportunists ushered in more change, altering the political and demographic landscape of New Mexico, sometimes legally, other times violently. The Lincoln County Wars of the 1870s are illustrative. U.S. conquest and colonization brought technological innovations, such as the railroad, and democracy replaced monarchy and empire. The radical shift into statehood in 1912, and then the thrusting of New Mexico into the center of world events in the 1940s with the Manhattan Project at Los Alamos, only strengthened New Mexico's duality, with one foot planted firmly in the past and the other in the uncertain future.

While there is a natural temptation to cling to the heroic and perhaps mythic aspects of our past, the truth is much more compelling. New Mexico is a land that was invaded, conquered, and changed by different cultures and peoples throughout the centuries. Conquest, invasion, and colonization have shaped our collective psyche. Assimilation has been attempted through missions, boarding schools, and other means and institutions. Yet the old ways persist.

We must talk about our history—whether one is for or against the Pueblo Revolt of 1680, or for or against the atomic bomb detonation at the Trinity Site in 1945. Conversations may be heated, but they are necessary, for it is through our history that we learn about ourselves and one another.

Whether 50, 100, or 500 years ago, historical events often seem as if they happened only yesterday. New Mexicans speak about their history with a fiery passion that might lead one to think those things happened to them, not earlier generations. Ours is a very intimate relationship with the past and with our ancestors. We are the land of mañana, the land of tomorrow, and, filtered through the lens of history, we become the land of ayer, the land of yesterday. History, direct and raw, is very much present in New Mexico.

A 14th-generation New Mexican, **Rob Martínez** *is the state historian. He can be found onstage throughout the central/northern Río Grande Valley performing New Mexican Hispano music, as well as acoustic pop and Beatles songs.*

SHUTTERSTOCK

▼ Albuquerque's Al Unser Jr. won the Indianapolis 500 twice, continuing in the tire tracks of his father, Al, and uncle, Bobby.

OUR SPORTS HEROES RACED INTO HISTORY

> "When it comes to sports, the Unser family put New Mexico on the map. Bobby and Al Unser grew up on Route 66, at their dad's Chevron station, when Route 66 was dirt. We need to always remember what they were able to accomplish out of Jerry Unser's garage. A family with nine Indy 500 victories is just improbable and a great story. If you grew up in Albuquerque, especially in the era that I did, those are your heroes. And they always will be. The legacy they left is tremendous."
>
> —CARLOS GARCIA, CURATOR OF THE NEON SIGN GRAVEYARD AT THE NEW WEST CENTRAL ROUTE 66 VISITOR CENTER

OUR CUISINE NOURISHES THE SOUL

Diné chef Justin Pioche puts a modern twist on Indigenous fare as a way to honor his ancestors.

Justin Pioche (Diné) didn't grow up eating Native foods, like blue corn mush with juniper ash or kneel-down bread. "I ate mac and cheese and Taco Bell," he recalls. Now the Farmington resident and chef behind Pioche Food Group is on a mission to preserve and promote the traditional cuisine he missed out on as a kid. At his eight-course LorAmy pop-up dinners, Pioche crafts modern interpretations of Indigenous dishes that highlight heirloom produce like amaranth and Hopi turquoise corn. In his Three Sisters dish, for example, squash blossoms are filled with a corn-and-bean ragout and topped with sunflower oil powder. Now it's Pioche's food that folks don't want to miss—his creative approach and unique flavors earned the 36-year-old a nod as a 2023 James Beard Award finalist for Best Chef of the Southwest. *—As told to Lanee Lee*

DOUGLAS MERRIAM

All the stories and knowledge I have been blessed to learn help me appreciate the history to tell the struggles my people have gone through. We serve a version of “bread of tears” (fry bread) at our dinners. During this course, I explain to our guests that this food represents our tenacity to live. From stories I’ve heard from the elders who lived through it, it goes back to when the government forced our people into prison camps and gave us rations of only canned foods, flour, lard, salt, and sugar—just enough to keep us from starving but not healthy.

I started LorAmy, whose name is a combination of my grandmas’ first names, to connect to my heritage and honor my people while utilizing my culinary training. That being said, my team and I love to cook what we like to eat—that’s where the modern techniques come into play. The dish at our pop-up that represents modern Native food the best is our version of neeshjizhii, or steamed corn stew. The flavors are traditional, but it looks nothing like a stew dish. We don’t serve the dish as a liquid. Every ingredient is separated and highlighted for flavor.

◀ The Three Sisters—corn, squash, and beans—create the foundation for Native cuisine.

My family and I are passionate to pass on this knowledge to the youth, from cooking and seed planting to food preservation. If we don’t, it will be the end of our culture that makes New Mexico and the Southwest special.

I am proud to be able to represent my people and our culture. It’s great that our Native foodways are finally being recognized on a global level.

FROM TOP: DOUGLAS MERRIAM, GABRIELLA MARKS

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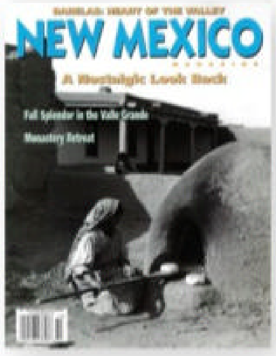
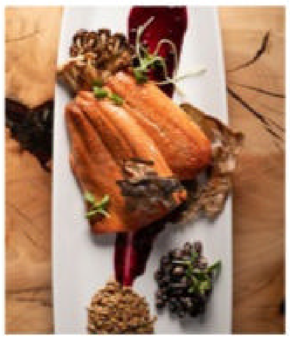


ON THE COVER

October 2004

“A woman bakes bread in the traditional way, using an adobe wood-fired horno at San Ildefonso Pueblo.”



MAIN COURSE

Justin Pioche picks his favorite Native restaurants.

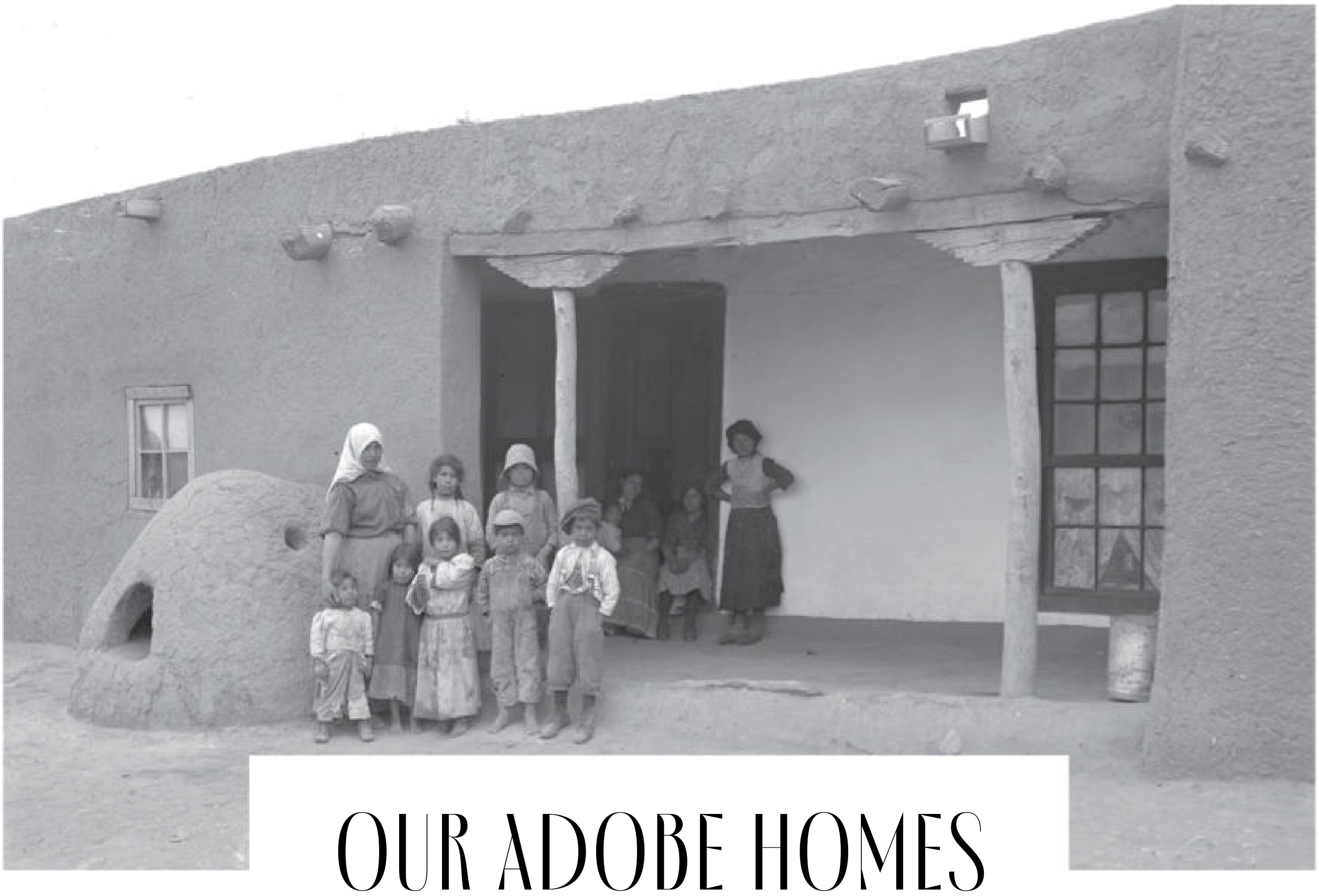
Juniper Coffee + Eatery. Pioche suggests the blue corn mush at this Farmington café. “They source a lot of their ingredients from Navajo-owned-and-operated businesses while promoting Native art in the dining area.” *juniper-coffee-eatery.com*

The Farmington Indian Center. “The cooks here use a lot of ingredients from Navajo Agricultural Products Industry,” he says. “The rotating mutton stews—like potato, squash, or hominy—are always great.” *fmtn.org*

The Indian Pueblo Kitchen. The restaurant serves up an unforgettable experience inside the Indian Pueblo Cultural Center, in Albuquerque. “They have awesome Pueblo bread and red chile stew,” he says. *indianpueblokitchen.org*

OUR WEAVINGS WARM YOUR HEART

> “Chimayó weaving has been passed down for generations. It’s such an historical art form. It’s rooted in New Mexico, and it became Chimayó weaving specifically in northern New Mexico. You won’t find it anywhere else. It started out as utilitarian and now we’re branching into it as an art form. It’s beautiful, and in every piece you can see the people who made it and how they think. Chimayó weaving is a way of expressing yourself with geometrics and color.”
>
> —EMILY TRUJILLO, EIGHTH-GENERATION CHIMAYÓ WEAVER AND TEACHER AT CENTINELA TRADITIONAL ARTS



OUR ADOBE HOMES ARE TIMELESS

In New Mexico, the buildings remind us that *de la tierra fuimos formado*—from the earth we were formed. **BY LEVI ROMERO**

Artists' paintings and old photos in books capture the soft forms of adobe houses, melding like loaves of horno bread into the New Mexico landscape. Their scale and proportion in these depictions are balanced with their context and surroundings. They represent the uniqueness of the state's architecture, cultures, and people. I am fortunate to have lived my life in homes constructed from adobe. There is something about a house built out of earthen materials that connects its inhabitants to la tierra sagrada, our sacred Mother Earth.

Since the 16th-century rumor of the Seven Cities of Cíbola—a legend that arose when the shimmering materials on a pueblo's earth-plastered walls were mistaken for gold—the allure of adobe in New Mexico has persisted. People have been building with earth since humans began to construct their homes.

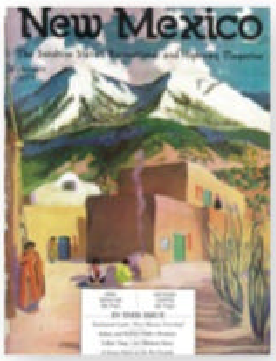
When I was growing up in the Embudo Valley, I heard stories of how the people's agrarian lifestyle was sustained through acts of mutualismo, in which neighbors and relatives shared the labor for the construction and maintenance of their adobe homes. Women from the community worked as enjarradoras, going from house to house doing the plastering. The handprints I have discovered under layers of earthen plaster in my grandmother's 200-year-old adobe walls cause me to wonder. Whose hands might they have belonged to, what conversations were had, and what songs were sung during the annual replastering?

I remember a time when some people who lived in homes built from adobe, vigas, and other traditional materials would long for a cinder-block, wood-frame, or mobile home. There was a stigma that one who lived in such a place could not afford a house built from modern materials. Then, in the early 1980s, I worked as an apprentice draftsman for a designer who specialized in high-end passive-solar custom adobe homes designed for wealthy clients around Santa Fe. By then, adobe construction had become expensive, and these clients were the only ones who could afford such homes. I began to appreciate adobe, and my insights were grounded in the houses of my upbringing.

In the late 1960s and early '70s, after new building materials became more readily available, people began to abandon the adobe homes that had belonged to their families for generations. Seeing no value in these treasures, they began using them as storage spaces or demolished them altogether. I came from a family rich in tradition. My nearest relatives

▲ In Agua Fría, a family stands before an adobe home, circa 1912.

PALACE OF THE GOVERNORS PHOTO ARCHIVES, NEW MEXICO HISTORY MUSEUM, SANTA FE, NEW MEXICO (#014104)



ON THE COVER

February 1934

Howard Patterson's cover *New Mexico Indian People* coincided with the Philadelphia artist's New Mexico visit.

were great-aunts and great-uncles who lived in accordance with a time long gone—without the modern amenities of electricity, indoor plumbing, or propane heating. In my lifetime, I have witnessed the old world transform into the new. But I still feel more at home in the world of my antepasados. A world of familia, comunidad, respeto, humildad, y casitas de adobe.

While youth across the country were negating their parents' traditions, young Chicanos—many of whom had returned home from college or the military during the Vietnam War—embraced the cultural traditions of their antepasados. They resisted assimilation and the modern lifestyles being introduced into the village. They preferred building their homes with adobe and heating with woodstoves or beehive fireplaces. They embraced the traditional manito way of life, not as historic preservationists but as people living their herencia.

Other young men and women from diverse backgrounds also began honing their skills as laborers and builders and eventually became recognized craftswomen and -men in the community. In addition, journals, books, classes, and workshops promoted earthen building design and construction. The counterculture youth who had settled in New Mexico adopted adobe as a favored building material for their crudely designed homes. These hippie houses are all but gone or renovated beyond their original semblance, but theirs was an aesthetic that borrowed from traditional adobe building methods and a regard for the nonconformist, off-the-grid lifestyles they found in the villages of northern New Mexico.

One does not need to be a professional or expert to make adobe houses. Anyone who knows how to wield a shovel, a trowel, and a level can more or less do it. Adobe is very forgiving.

Being from New Mexico, our relationship to the earth also filters into our identity in the world at large. At a poetry reading in East Harlem a few years ago, I introduced myself and my three friends from New Mexico who had traveled there with me as "mud-dwelling people." That term comes from a story our Native American friend in the group recounts about the time when a delegation from his pueblo went to Washington, D.C., in the 1930s to petition for the return of lands that had been omitted from a U.S. government survey.

Having dinner one evening, they looked across the room and spotted a group of men at another table. "Look," said one of the gentlemen to the others, "they're dressed like us; they have haircuts like ours. They must also be mud-dwelling people doing business here in Washington. After we eat, we should go over and talk to them."

When dinner ended, they walked across the room to greet the other men. As they approached, they were startled to realize that the other mud-dwelling people were their own reflections, shown in a large mirror on the wall. Mirrors were scarce at the pueblo, and they were not used to seeing themselves.

My introduction of my friends, by way of our connection to the earth, may have seemed strange to the audience in New York. But my friends and I, all from different backgrounds, had one thing in common. We all had grown up or lived in houses constructed from adobe. We were, after all, mud-dwelling people.

Levi Romero *is an architect, a University of New Mexico associate professor of Chicana and Chicano studies, and New Mexico's inaugural poet laureate.*

▼ The vast beauty of the Valles Caldera National Preserve makes it a national treasure.

OUR GEOLOGY ROCKS

"The Jemez Mountains are full of geological wonders, formed by many eruptions of New Mexico's own supervolcano. The Valles Caldera National Preserve, which is one of the most beautiful landscapes in our state, is a giant volcanic crater created by an eruption that occurred 1.2 million years ago. Many of the dome-like hills within the caldera are all smaller, younger volcanoes, and the thermal activity is still apparent at the hot springs that dot the surrounding hills."

—NELIA DUNBAR, STATE GEOLOGIST

ANDREW KORNYLAK

ATOMIC HISTORY WAS MADE HERE

From Los Alamos to the Trinity Site, New Mexico played a pivotal role in nuclear development, testing, and advancement. **BY JENNIFER LEVIN**

In 1943, hundreds of scientists came to New Mexico to build an atomic bomb before the Nazis could. J. Robert Oppenheimer and his team toiled in a top-secret laboratory located at a former boys' school and made history when they detonated the world's first atomic bomb—nicknamed "the gadget"—sending a mushroom cloud into the sky near Alamogordo on July 16, 1945. This summer, the story comes to the big screen in Christopher Nolan's *Oppenheimer*, which was filmed in Los Alamos and Santa Fe. See the movie and then hit the road to learn more.

Start at Albuquerque's **National Museum of Nuclear Science & History**. Its newest exhibit, *At Play in the Atomic Age*, showcases the A-bomb's influence on toys, movies, and comic books, through 2023. "We have the largest collection of unclassified nuclear weapons in the world," says Jennifer Hayden, the museum's president. *nuclearmuseum.org*

In Santa Fe, a plaque commemorates the receiving office at **109 East Palace Avenue**, where new scientists and their families checked in for transport to Los Alamos. *nmmag.us/109eastpalace*

The **Los Alamos History Museum** provides daily walking tours of the historic campus where the scientists lived and worked. *losalamoshistory.org*

The **Bradbury Science Museum**, in Los Alamos, hosts a special Oppenheimer installation in July and August, featuring his notes, a personal copy of the Bhagavad Gita, and other rarities. *lanl.gov/museum*

Chow down on the green chile cheeseburgers that nourished Trinity Site scientists at the **Original Owl Bar & Café**, in San Antonio. *sanantonioowl.com*

The **Manhattan Project National Historical Park** hosts exclusive "behind the fence" tours (October 18–20) of Los Alamos National Laboratory property. *nmmag.us/manhattan*

Visit ground zero for the gadget during the biannual **Trinity Site Open House** (October 21). *nmmag.us/trinitysite*

▲ Visitors gather around the stone marker at the Trinity Site, where the first nuclear test took place, in 1945.

SITE PLANS

New Mexico's historic sites and desert landscapes play major roles in *Oppenheimer*.

Oppenheimer House. Originally built in 1929 for Los Alamos Ranch School director A.J. Connell's sister, and located within the Manhattan Project historical park, this building was home to the lab director and his family from 1943 to 1945 and is in the process of becoming a museum. *nmmag.us/oppenheimerhouse*

Fuller Lodge. The Ranch School dining hall became a community center for Manhattan Project workers. Designed by architect John Gaw Meem, the lodge now welcomes visitors as a historic site and arts center. *losalamosartscouncil.org*

Lamy Train Station. The Atchison, Topeka and Santa Fe Railway depot was the first dusty stop in New Mexico for scientists making their way to the lab. *nmmag.us/lamystation*

ON THE COVER

January 1941

Albuquerque's Municipal Airport was captured on Kodachrome by TWA and reproduced in three colors.

NMTD

OUR SIGNS GET YOUR MOTOR RUNNING

Carlos Garcia works to preserve vintage neon and give it new life.

Albuquerque car dealer Carlos Garcia grew up a block away from Route 66 after his mother moved to town in 1955 to attend the University of New Mexico. She instilled a love of Route 66 and classic neon signs in her son, who has spent the past 15 years tracking down and restoring neon signs with his brother, Ed. They've now amassed hundreds of signs for a collection housed in the historic Glorieta Station, in Albuquerque. Garcia serves as the curator for the neon sign graveyard at the new West Central Route 66 Visitor Center. *—As told to Julian Dossett*

By all accounts, Albuquerque had the best stretch of neon in all of Route 66. My mom was just mesmerized by it when she got here. So many people were brought here because of Route 66. You hear story after story: "We were planning to move to Arizona or California, and we got to Albuquerque and fell in love and never left."

The real reason that the neon exists was for people to promote their businesses. Our love of Albuquerque and Route 66 comes from growing up here. The architecture, the signs, the legendary figures that owned businesses along Route 66, and the people who lived here—it all kind of ties together.

The signs are a springboard to what's around the sign. Or why it was there.

The signs evoke memories. In every great neon sign, there's a great story. One of my favorites is the Española Arrow Motel sign. The Atencio family matriarch started selling tamales to all the workers driving up to Los Alamos to build the labs. Shortly after, in 1958, they opened the Arrow Motel and liquor store. The grandkids' job every summer was to repaint the sign. When we got it, we had to take about 20 layers of paint off to find the original colors.

We have a big driving culture in New Mexico. You need a car if you live here. Given how big the state is, geographically, there's just no two ways about it. With our climate being so dry, cars last a whole lot longer here. We have way more classic cars on the road because they don't rust.

People express themselves through their cars. And it's not always about who has the most money—it's who has the most creativity or who found the coolest car in a barn. You just never know what you're gonna see.

You park a car under a neon sign on Route 66. To me, there's just nothing better. It means so much to the country, but it really means a lot to New Mexico, because so much of our identity is wrapped up in Route 66.

Blue Swallow
MOTEL
VACANCY
TV
OFFICE

▲ The neon sign at the Blue Swallow Motel in Tucumcari calls for a road trip in your favorite ride.

LIGHT PLACE

Carlos Garcia maps out a few of his favorite neon signs.

Mac's La Sierra Coffee Shop. One of Albuquerque's most beloved neon signs is topped with a sculpture of a cow. "I never get tired of looking at it," Garcia says. "It's just a spectacular sign." *6217 Central Ave. NW*

The El Don Motel. The Albuquerque sign features a neon cowboy riding a horse, lassoing the words "El Don." "I love the colors, the shape, and the script on the sign," he says. *2222 Central Ave. SW*

Rio Pecos Ranch Truck Terminal. The Santa Rosa sign depicts an 18-wheeler with a smiling driver wearing a cowboy hat. "How often do you see a giant sign in the shape of a semi-truck?" Garcia says. *2464 Historic Route 66*

NMTD

OUR WILD PLACES TAME HEARTS

A fire lookout finds comfort in the mysteries and beauty of the Gila National Forest. **BY PHILIP CONNORS**

Almost anywhere you live in New Mexico, a mountain range rises within beckoning distance. Our major cities all stand in their shadows. Their names ring with poetry: the Sangre de Cristos, the Sacramentos, the Sandías, the Organs, the Mogollons.

If you put down roots here or count yourself among those whose roots go generations deep, you will develop an unreasoning love for a favorite mountain. Maybe you came to it young or in a certain mood or frame of mind. Perhaps it was love at first sight. Often you will choose not to profane the place by mentioning its name to outsiders. Let them find it on their own—if they can.

When I first saw the Gila Wilderness, I saw it from the top of a mountain. My friend worked the fire watch gig there, and she graciously shared the splendors of the place with me for a weekend. By the end of those three days, I didn't want to leave. I mean really didn't want to leave. She sensed this. So she worked a little magic and found a way to pass the job on to me.

I arrived there with a scarred soul. A brother's suicide and a rather too intimate encounter with the destruction of the World Trade Center towers had left their marks on me. But in this landscape of hulking peaks, broken canyons, tilted mesas, and hidden springs, I felt something ancient and wild extend an invitation of healing. The wildness in your heart got you all twisted up? Come into the country and learn a thing or two about the dignity of wildness, the irrational beauty of it.

That was 21 years ago, right around the 78th birthday of the Gila Wilderness. This year marks its

▲ In the Gila National Forest, Hillsboro Peak tower looks out on the Black Range.

JAY HEMPHILL

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ON THE COVER

May 1948

J. J. Stienmetz captured this fishing picture just north of the Lisboa Springs Fish Hatchery on the Pecos River.

99th. The Gila, as anyone who knows it will proudly tell you, is the birthplace of the wilderness idea put into actual practice: Take a piece of wild country and place it forever off-limits to new roads, or indeed any incursion from industrial machines, motorized or mechanized. Try to let it be what it wants to be, not what we would rather it be.

Twenty-one years of mountain sitting have made the place the center of meaning in my life. Chief among the experience's joys are the fellow creatures and their mysterious habits, which grow less mysterious the longer one observes them.

What does the mountain want to be? A place where bears tear the bark off dead trees in search of army cutworm moths rich in lipids. Where short-horned lizards sun themselves on the rocks and dine on passing ants. Where Clark's nutcrackers swing from limber pine branches like gymnasts on the uneven bars, pecking for seeds they then bury across the landscape in their version of a dispersed food pantry. Where ladybugs chase aphids. Where lichens drink fog.

I have been in conversation with the mountain long enough to have scattered a pinch of ash from two different friends who chose cremation as their final act. Their bone shards have joined with the ancient story of the mountain, a story that includes Native people who once gathered there to enact rituals and ceremonies, perhaps to be closer to the sky gods. Scattered potsherds testify to the sacred place the mountain held in their cosmology. The place hums with their energy still, a millennium later.

In my two decades there, I have seen the mountain buried in snow, deluged with rain, parched by drought, and engulfed in smoke. Some of my favorite old trees are now limbless, blackened spires, monuments to what was before the burn. It is deep and complex work to sort through the grief of that, when what's been wounded and scarred is the very place that soothed my wounds and scars.

But for all it's given me, I owe it my continuing attention at the very least. *How will its scars heal? What does it want to be next?*

If you fall in love with a mountain, you come to realize the love is as dynamic as the life that populates the place. Another way to say it: If you work on a mountain long enough, it works on you. And if you love it enough, you just might feel it love you back.

A fire lookout for 21 years in the Gila National Forest, **Philip Connors** *is the author of three books:* A Song for the River, All the Wrong Places, *and* Fire Season.

▼ A majestic view of clouds, peaks, and valleys unfolds at Hillsboro Peak lookout, in the Gila National Forest.

JAY HEMPHILL

OUR RESILIENCE IS INSPIRING

Since being rescued from a Capitán Mountains wildfire in 1950, Smokey Bear has spread a message that's just as relevant today.

Mary Lavin grew up in the Midwest dreaming of the forests and mountains of the Southwest. She moved to New Mexico after studying forestry and natural resource management, and first worked in timber, recreation, curating, and teaching. Today, after a little more than a year as manager of Smokey Bear Historical Park, in Capitán, Lavin has found her dream job as a walking, talking encyclopedia of Smokey Bear lore and a passionate keeper of his legacy. She has witnessed some surprisingly emotional moments play out at the park's visitor center, which tells the story of the burned, orphaned cub who survived a human-caused fire in 1950 and became a global symbol of wildfire prevention with his "Only You Can Prevent Forest Fires" campaign. In April 2001, Smokey's message was officially updated to "Only You Can Prevent Wildfires," after wildfires became a chronic problem not just in forests, but in grasslands and other areas. *—As told to Tracy Dingmann*

▶ Ray Bell helped nurse Smokey Bear back to health as a cub.

I'm constantly amazed by how much people love Smokey Bear. We have people who walk in the door and start to cry. They remember the little Smokey Bear they had as a child and become very emotional when they see the historical pictures and read the stories on the exhibits. He was a part of the most successful Ad Council campaign in history, and yet his message and his story is very personal to so many.

Smokey Bear is a local story connected to our state's history. I'm especially drawn to a series of photographs of Smokey Bear when he was first recovered from the fire. There's one at Dr. Edwin Smith's veterinary office in Santa Fe just a day or so after they found him. Smokey Bear is in Judy Bell's lap. Judy was New Mexico game warden Ray Bell's four-year-old daughter, and the Bells nursed the cub back to health at their home by feeding him honey, baby food, and milk by hand.

Smokey's message is more relevant today than ever and will matter for generations to come. The history and science of fire ecology, a warming climate, and forest and watershed health are complex and deserve careful study and response. As we strive to restore health, resilience, and sustainability to New Mexico forests and watersheds, I believe Smokey's message remains an important reminder for us all. Our individual actions really matter for the greater good, and we each have a chance to directly impact our natural resources through personal responsibility, environmental education, and careful attention when we work and play in our forests, woodlands, and grasslands.

We love to invite people to learn more and share their Smokey stories with us. Wildland firefighters from all over the country come to pay their respects to Smokey, visit his gravesite, and see the New Mexico Wildland Fallen Firefighter Memorial. All of it is very moving.

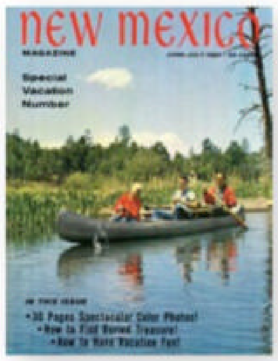
BEAR NECESSITIES

You can make a difference. Here's how.

Start young. Kids can take part in the Junior Ranger program, earning souvenirs by participating in an educational activity about fire prevention.

Pay your respects. The life-size bronze New Mexico Wildland Fallen Firefighter Memorial commemorates 38 New Mexico wildland firefighters who have died in the line of duty.

Enjoy Smokey Bear Days. The family-friendly event returns May 3–4, 2024, with a firefighter challenge, vendors, crafts and activities for kids, food, music, art, and conservation stations. *nmmag.us/smokey*



ON THE COVER

June/July 1963

"Canoes have been generally associated with romance, but photographer John Whiteside shows what fun it can be."

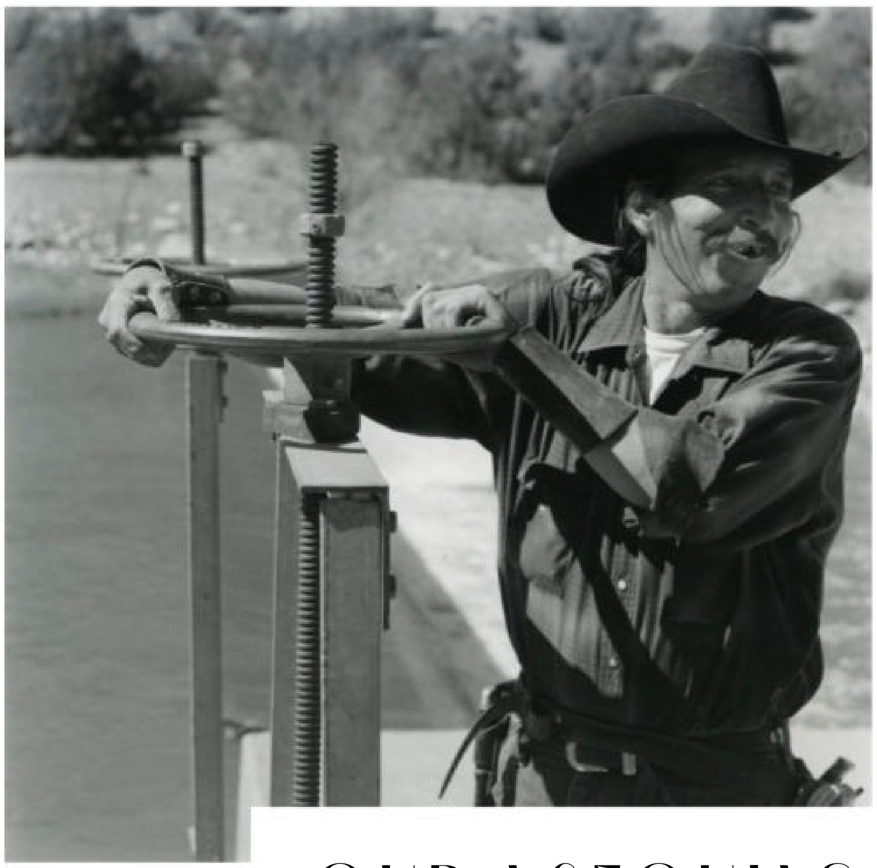
STATE OF NEW MEXICO
DEPT. OF GAME & FISH

DANVIS COLLECTION/ALAMY

OUR PUBLIC LANDS ARE ENCHANTING

"New Mexico is simply magical. We are so fortunate to have such a treasure trove of public lands, of which nearly 13.5 million acres are managed by the BLM. Our state provides not only spectacular recreation, but also the ease and accessibility to connect with the rich history of our state. As a native of the Southwest, I feel having such easy access to public lands provides the public with limitless opportunities to experience those connections. It is one of the most amazing parts of life in New Mexico that simply doesn't exist anywhere else."

—AL ELSER, DISTRICT MANAGER, U.S. BUREAU OF LAND MANAGEMENT, FARMINGTON DISTRICT OFFICE



▲ Mayordomo Joe Aragon opens the headgate of the acequia madre at El Cerrito during Ditch Day, 2003.

OUR ACEQUIAS FEED THE LAND

In 1969, a newcomer began learning a lifetime of lessons from the acequia system. **BY STANLEY CRAWFORD**

Within a few days of arriving in New Mexico's Embudo Valley, my wife, RoseMary, and I were inspecting a rental property in the upper end of the narrow valley. It was an old adobe, sans bathroom or running water, but capacious.

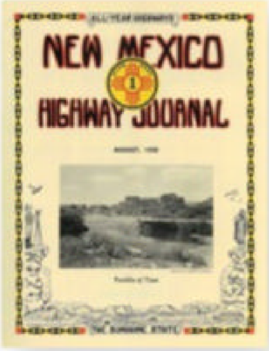
A flimsy outhouse leaned in the backyard. Some 50 feet from the back porch, there was a narrow channel. I walked over to it through the dry grass and was astounded to see it brimming with water, flowing from east to west, slipping beneath an old apple tree and the barbed-wire fence that separated the property from the downstream neighbor's. I was entranced. There is something magical about small watercourses wending their way through arid landscapes.

This was my first acequia. New to New Mexico, I didn't even know the term then, was yet to learn that it was the Acequia del Medio, that it was one of nine in the five-mile-long valley, and that there were up to a thousand other acequias throughout the state. But when I peered down into its clear flow, I felt that, in some sense, I had come home. We lived there for two years before we were able to move into our own homemade adobe on the other side of the river, el otro lado, in an area known as El Bosque and served by the Acequia del Bosque.

I had many more things to learn about acequias. One was that they are governed by a commission made up of three landowner members of the acequia. The actual work of maintaining the ditch and managing the water is done by a mayordomo or mayordoma. In these terms, one touches on the rich cultural and geographical history of the acequia tradition. Acequia is an Arabic term, pointing to North African origins; mayordomo is from the Latin *majordomo*, meaning head of household.

Acequia traditions were brought to New Mexico during the Spanish conquest, taking root in the land alongside, and perhaps aided by, similar traditions practiced by Pueblo people. But most of the terms are Spanish: comisionados/as, or commissioners; parciantes, or member-owners; la limpia or la saca, the cleaning and digging out of the acequia. The word itself is two-pronged in meaning: acequia can refer to the physical irrigation ditch or to its governing structure.

Acequias are unusual in many respects. They are among the oldest engineered structures, in a vernacular sense, in continuous operation on the continent. They are maintained through communal



ON THE COVER

August 1930

A photo of Taos Pueblo by Brooks Studio was featured alongside John Galleon's "Stories of the Taos People."

labor, both volunteer and modestly paid. Their democratic organization, which has flown under the radar of numerous absolutist regimes, controls a basic resource: water, which is rare.

Serious lessons in acequia culture began for me when I was elected commissioner in the mid-1970s. I was at first mistakenly flattered by what I took as appreciation of … *what, my organizational skills?* The reality was that acequias can also mean families feuding over who gets, or doesn't get, water during dry times. I was probably elected in the hope that I might side with one of the feuding families.

The function of the commission is to oversee the mayordomo and to collect money from parciantes to deal with acequia expenses and pay the mayordomía, the mayordomo's monthly salary. Only commissioners get an exemption from ditch dues. So we would all climb in a car and go andando collectando whenever the ditch treasury needed money, leaning particularly on those who had serious delincuencias. This was my way—as tax collector—of integrating myself into my adopted and largely Hispanic community.

The Acequia del Bosque, on the north side of the valley, is often the first to conduct the limpia, which is overseen by the mayordomo, who marks out sections, also known as tareas (tasks or chores), for the workers to dig with a stick or shovel (pala). Tareas are usually six to eight feet in length, enough room for workers, peones, to shovel without banging into each other. A pion is also a form of measure. My property of about two acres is rated at one pion, meaning I must supply one worker, or the cash equivalent, to the acequia for every day worked, which in turn determines how many hours of water I can use during times of rationing. It also determines the amount of mayordomía I pay.

Acequia culture is part of the soul of New Mexico. Acequias feed countless backyard and market gardens, orchards, and pastures. They were also a source of drinking and washing water. These ancient waterways not only have remained an embodiment of the traditions of the earliest Hispanic colonists, but they also have enriched the lives of newcomers who embrace these systems. For me, the acequia has been a mentor, imparting lessons about water, labor, and community. It has turned neighbors into collaborators and friends. Above all, the acequia has rooted me to the patch of land I have called home for the past 50 years.

Every year, when the water begins flowing again in the acequia, in late March or early April, I know that all will be well, that winter is over, spring is here, and summer is coming.

Stanley Crawford, *a farmer in Dixon, is the author of several books, including* Mayordomo: Chronicle of an Acequia in Northern New Mexico.

◄ **From left:** The northern village of El Cerrito's acequia madre is a hand-dug gravity flow irrigation system that runs 1.5 miles to water gardens, orchards, and fields. Andrew Aragon and Jack Lanstra ensure the water is flowing.

PART OF EL CERRITO Y LA ACEQUIA MADRE COLLECTION, ACCN. #2003-014, COPYRIGHT, SHARON STEWART 1992-2003. USED HERE WITH PERMISSION.

OUR TURQUOISE SHIMMERS WITH MEANING

This touchstone is inlaid with culture and history.

Porter Swentzell, tribal secretary for Santa Clara Pueblo and executive director of Kha'p'o Community School, admits that he isn't an expert in turquoise. Some of Swentzell's earliest memories are of watching members of the community earn a living by working in pottery and sculpture, not jewelry. He earned a doctorate in justice studies and served as assistant professor and department chair of Indigenous liberal studies at the Institute of American Indian Arts, in Santa Fe. When it comes to the story of turquoise in New Mexico, the scholar has found that there is simply more beyond the blue than meets the eye. *—As told to Karen Fischer*

There was always clay around. It was a way of life. I didn't know many people who had a nine-to-five job. We're not a pueblo known for jewelry, but we utilize it in our traditional activities. Native artists sell their products for their livelihood, but in our community there is also a demand for those things. We are the major consumers of our own art.

My family had two or three turquoise necklaces growing up. They were precious. Turquoise was hard to get. As a family, we had to share the turquoise for ceremonies. I think my mom, Roxanne Swentzell, traded her artwork as a sculptor for it. People would get things through trading and exchange, which is still common today.

▶ The Zuni word for turquoise means "sky stone." The pueblo uses the precious gemstone for protection.

Going back a thousand years to Chaco Canyon, even earlier, think of the natural environment. Turquoise was spectacular. It's bright, it's vibrant. A rock may not seem that special to us now, but a thousand years ago it was as special as can be.

When the Spanish invaders came into New Mexico, they were looking for a city of gold. They found turquoise, and they were disappointed that the people had only "Turk-ish" rock. From the Spanish perspective, turquoise had no value or meaning.

I think it's ironic. The Spanish didn't see it in the 16th century, but turquoise became a major product for tourists to buy through the curio trade. Turquoise increased in value over materials that were historically more difficult for Native artists to obtain.

For example, there is no ocean here. Native jewelers in the Southwest often used seashell, spiny oyster, and coral, but that had to come from far away. Those materials were held in high esteem, but people don't think about it in the same way now.

My wife is from the Santo Domingo Pueblo. When we got married, many of the gifts that were given to me were necklaces.

We had nothing. We received enough to equip my kids. Now I can say to my kids, "Oh, which necklace do you want to carry tomorrow?" They don't have to share like my household did growing up.

My favorite kind of jewelry is shell necklaces inlaid with turquoise. That way, it's black, white, and blue on top of the shell itself.

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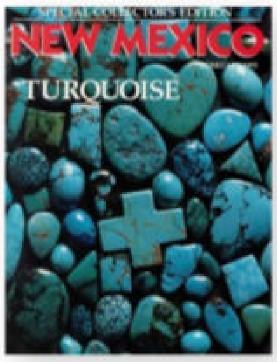


ON THE COVER

January 1995

Mark Nohl photographed various types of treated and untreated turquoise for this collector's issue.

BE JEWELED

Mine these spots for Native-made turquoise jewelry and more.

Palace of the Governors, Santa Fe. Porter Swentzell always takes visitors to walk the line of artists selling handcrafted wares under the portal. "You can engage with the artist directly," he says. "Your money goes to the person who made your jewelry." *nmmag.us/portal*

Gallup Trading Company, Gallup. Dubbed the Biggest Little Store in Gallup, this shop lives up to its nickname when you walk through its adobe facade to discover glass cases stuffed to the brim with handmade turquoise treasures. *galluptrading.com*

Winfield Trading Company, Vanderwagen. Call ahead for an appointment at this family-owned store specializing in turquoise and offering at least eight varieties of hand-cut cabochons. Ask to see the vault. *winfieldtradingcompany.com*

SHUTTERSTOCK

OUR AGRICULTURAL HERITAGE HAS DEEP FAMILY ROOTS

Fita Witte nurtures our farming and ranching traditions by passing along the values to others.

Growing up, Fita Witte only knew life on her family's ranch in the Estancia Valley. Born Fita Aceves, she married fifth-generation rancher Jerry Witte and worked the ranch for 60 years before retiring in 2003. A member of the New Mexico CowBelles since 1962, Witte has led the Mesilla Valley chapter as president and held state-level offices. She was president of the American National CattleWomen in 2008 and served on the Cattlemen's Beef Board. Witte's dedication earned her a spot in the New Mexico Farm and Ranch Heritage Museum's *Her Land: Women in Agriculture* rotating exhibit, on view through this fall. Witte now watches her grandchildren work toward the future of agriculture. *—As told to Jennifer C. Olson*

I was born in 1942 at a hospital in Albuquerque. My mother was born on the ranch. She's a Schubert of German and Hispanic origin. My dad was a Chimayó weaver. My two brothers learned how to weave, but the yarn irritated my allergies.

On the ranch, we looked after the cows, horses, chickens. We even had pigs once. I liked watching the piglets. Lord, there were many times I fell off a horse and got run over by a cow.

We sold the cattle. We ate some of them. We had a big garden. I didn't like hoeing weeds, but you do it or you don't eat. Mother canned all our vegetables. I freeze stuff. If we had to depend on my garden to live, we'd starve. My mother had a green thumb. I guess mine fell off.

We were isolated. I didn't know people didn't work on ranches. Hell, we women didn't even need to burn our bras to do the work. In high school, I worked a summer job at a desk. That did not impress me. I wanted to be outdoors, working with animals, riding horses, gathering eggs.

When we got married, Jerry was working on a Santa Fe ranch. Then, after five years in Arizona, we ran the Witte Ranch, on Rowe Mesa, between Las Vegas and Santa Fe. Every day, you had a wonderful sunrise. You looked over at the calves and felt happy to see them bouncing around. Life was good.

My boys started riding horses and working with cattle at a young age. I'm glad we instilled farming and ranching in our children.

My biggest accomplishment is informing the public on where their food comes from. Without farmers and ranchers, we're not going to eat.

▲ A man and his children stand near a Mora Valley fence in 1895.

PALACE OF THE GOVERNORS PHOTO ARCHIVES, NEW MEXICO HISTORY MUSEUM, SANTA FE, NEW MEXICO (#022467)

GROWTH POTENTIAL

Experience New Mexico's farming and ranching heritage at these sites.

New Mexico Farm and Ranch Heritage Museum. The 47-acre museum in Las Cruces tells the state's agricultural history through the eyes of real people across many cultures. *nmfarmandranchmuseum.org*

New Mexico State Fair. Since 1938, the fair has been the place to see top livestock, rodeo competitors, and food growers. *statefair.exponm.com*

El Rancho de las Golondrinas. "We maintain historic lifeways and traditional agricultural techniques that visitors can see and physically engage with, getting hands-on with history," says museum director Daniel Goodman. *golondrinas.org*

FOR US, CHILE MEANS HOME

For this daughter of Santa Fe, how you prepare your chile is who you are.

BY CARMELLA PADILLA

How do you make chile? It's a common question in our capsicum-crazed state, a culinary query that sounds deceptively simple. Reach for a recipe and heat up a pot? Almost, but not. Long before the stove is lit, crucial matters must be probed. Red or green? Mild or hot?

Like the season's first chile plants, which sprout small flowers shortly after the seedlings emerge, one consideration blooms into another as the chile novice grows into a connoisseur. There are questions of geography: Chimayó, La Mesa, or Hatch? Preferences in pod size, heat, and type: Big Jim? Sandía? Española Improved? And for this weather- and water-dependent crop, highly vulnerable to insects and disease, there are long-standing environmental concerns.

Myriad factors must converge before you sink a fork into your favorite rich red enchilada or savor a special medley of green. It's a wonder—maybe even a miracle—we get to eat it at all. And yet, without it, it's safe to say we wouldn't be fully New Mexican.

From the small chile patches in the north to the vast agrihuertas, or irrigated fields, of the south, our legacy of chile runs deep in our soils and our souls. Centuries of seed selection and cultivation have readied our distinctive, sun-kissed pods for the pleasure and, yes, the pain of the palate. The medically proven effect is a rush of endorphins that tempts our taste buds to want more. Our ever-growing appetite for chile's flavors fuels a multi-million-dollar industry and an international brand.

▶ The Santa Fe Farmers' Market is a hot spot for chiles of all colors and sizes each fall.

The question, then, is not so simple. Like many things here, the making of chile belies a complex multicultural backstory. This story straddles themes of nature, science, tradition, and time. It simmers in the stew of our uniquely New Mexican experience, a slow-cooked mix of history, heritage, and home.

The story of New Mexico chile is a 9,000-year history of the Americas, where the chiltepin plant first grew wild in the jungles of Bolivia and Peru. As predators bit into its berry-size fruit, the plant bit back, having developed a heated system of defense. Only migratory birds could withstand the counterattack, and their chile-seeded droppings took root across the landscape.

Chiltepin's potent flavor and curative properties were prized by Indigenous peoples—including the Inca, the Maya, and the Aztecs—for ceremonial, medicinal, and culinary use. The Aztecs domesticated the crop, cultivating the *Capsicum annuum* species, which they called chilli. By the Spanish conquest of 1519, they had developed dozens of cultivars—poblanos, serranos, jalapeños, and more. Spanish chronicler Bernardino de Sahagún described the Aztecs' chilli cuisine, citing such specialties as lobster with red and frog with green. European colonists quickly adopted the crop and changed its Nahuatl name to a Spanish spelling: chile.

Exactly when chile arrived in New Mexico is a heated subject. Indigenous cultures here traded with Indigenous cultures to the south long before the Spanish incursion of 1598. Presumably, chile would have been a valuable item of exchange. The first chiles documented as being planted in the state grew in places where both Indigenous and Hispano cultures thrived, and where those who came after still sow their heirloom seeds.

In New Mexico, where warm days and cool nights proved ideal for growing, the perennial chile plant was adapted as an annual. Chile soon graced dinner tables across the territory, while the Santa Fe Trail and the railroad carried it to other regions. But the most significant event in the crop's early development occurred in Las Cruces in 1921, when Fabián García, a Mexico-born researcher at the New Mexico College of Agriculture and Mechanic Arts, introduced New Mexico No. 9.

García cross-bred three popular chiles—the brown pasilla, the scarlet colorado, and the richly dark negro—into a pod that was longer, milder, and redder than previous types. The

NEW MEXICO
SPECIAL ISSUE
Chile!
FIERY LORE!
HOT TRENDS!
SPICY RECIPES!

ON THE COVER

Feb./March 1996

Micah Hahn created the imaginative computer illustration for this special issue focused on chile.

high-yield cultivar was a staple for farmers for the next 30 years. García's innovation gave birth to the U.S. chile industry and launched today's Chile Pepper Institute at NMSU.

In the early 1990s, I pursued my passion for chile, trudging through fields statewide for two years to write a book on the subject. Inevitably, the journey led me back to the dinner table of my Santa Fe childhood.

There, my mother, Zenaida, blended dried ristras of red with onion and pork into a robust sauce we often ate by the bowlful. She hand-peeled pods of green that my father, Reyes, roasted on the backyard grill. These were chopped and tossed into a chunky pork-and-potato stew. Red or green, in varying preparations, theirs was a collaborative cuisine steeped in the spicy aroma of love and tradition.

My mother is now nearly 100, and her chile offerings are rare gastronomic gifts. My late father's joy in eating the hottest chile he could take is the stuff of family legend. Times change, but the essence of my chile home remains. Their example is the recipe for making my own countless chile meals.

I've imagined the meal I would make if I knew it was my last. Stacked blue corn pork enchiladas, swimming in a picante pool of red. Extra onions. Cheese bubbling at the edges. Egg over easy on top.

All of which brings me back to you. How do you make *your* chile?

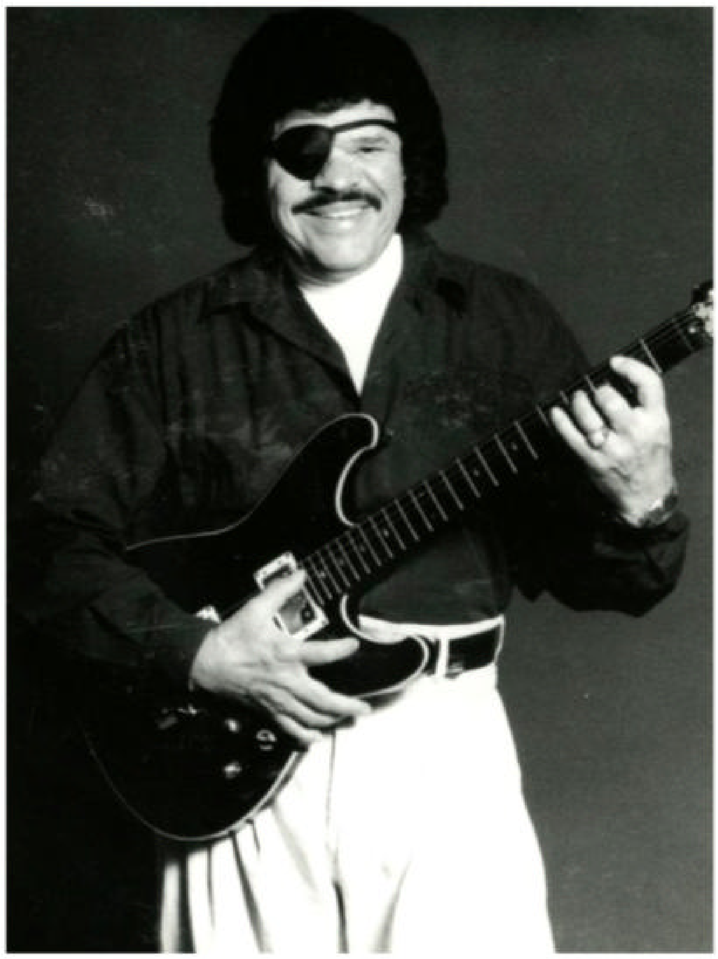
Carmella Padilla's *many books include* The Chile Chronicles: Tales of a New Mexico Harvest.

OUR CHILES RELLENOS CAN'T BE BEAT

"I'm Mexican American, and I think chiles rellenos bring a bit of both cultures together. We use chile grown in Hatch. We roast them, which gives a lot of flavor. Our secret is we add a tiny bit of sour cream to the filling. It's a family recipe that my mother adapted. We've been open for 12 years, and chiles rellenos have always been on our menu."

—ZAIDE ZARAZUA FERNANDEZ, MANAGER AT LA CUEVA CAFE, IN TAOS

DOUGLAS MERRIAM



OUR MUSIC STRIKES CHORDS

Al Hurricane Jr. continues a tradition that moves our feet—and our souls.

With more than 30 albums and thousands of shows stretching back to the 1950s, Al Hurricane helped define the sound of modern New Mexico. Known as the godfather of New Mexico music, Hurricane passed away in 2017, but he handed down that musical legacy to his son Al Hurricane Jr., who has spent 50 years playing on many of his father's songs and recording his own albums. The 63-year-old singer continues to blend Latin, Western, rock, and jazz to create his unique New Mexico sound.

—As told to Julian Dossett

New Mexico music is a big part of our state, just like our red and green chile. People love our chile, and people love New Mexico music. Our chile is different from other places', and we don't speak 100 percent correct Spanish—we have our own dialect here. Sometimes we call it Spanglish, right? Because it's English words with Spanish words intertwined. That goes with the music also.

It's kind of like its own genre. A lot of people will say, "That sounds kind of like Tejano." But it's not quite Tejano. It's got its own flavor. People say they can't sit down and just watch it—they gotta get up and dance. It just brings people together.

My dad was such a huge influence. The funny part was he didn't start out playing Hispanic music or Latin music. When he started his band in 1953, they played a lot of rock 'n' roll. They backed up artists such as Chubby Checker and Chuck Berry. Then my dad became Fats Domino's guitar player.

There was a story my grandma would tell. She promoted Fats Domino in the area. The guitar player hurt his hand and he couldn't play. My grandma says, "I got a guitar player who can play." It was my dad. They were going to tour Europe, and my dad told Fats Domino, "I won't be able to go. I want to stay here with my family." That's when he started making Spanish music.

He'd take a waltz and make it into a ranchera. I think it all meshes together. The music just makes everyone happy.

I hope the younger generations continue to support New Mexico music. I hope they keep our traditions alive. From generation to generation, we lose our culture and our traditions. I'm hoping through the music that it will continue to live on.

▲ Al Hurricane helped to popularize New Mexican music and paved the way for others, including his son, Al Jr.

CENTER FOR SOUTHWEST RESEARCH, UNIVERSITIES LIBRARIES, UNIVERSITY OF NEW MEXICO, ZIM CSWR PICT COLLS PICT 2013-004

LISTEN UP

Add these New Mexico hitmakers to your Spotify playlist.

Robert Mirabal. The Grammy Award–winning musician crafts sonic experiments in a vast landscape of genres that vary from avant-garde rock, jazz, and spoken word to stunningly beautiful flute arrangements that connect to his Taos Pueblo roots. *facebook.com/mirabalreserveofficial*

Lone Piñon. The orquesta típica invites listeners to step into a rich musical portrait filled with Spanish, Mexican, Indigenous, and European immigrant influences that are brought to life with fiddle, accordion, vihuela, and upright bass. *lonepinon.com*

Chevel Shepherd. Since winning *The Voice* in 2018, at age 16, the Farmington-based singer has wowed audiences with her classic country with a contemporary spin, culminating in her 2021 self-released debut, *Everybody's Got a Story*. *chevel.org*

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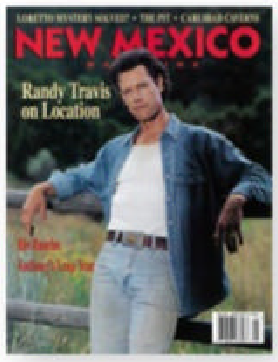


ON THE COVER

January 2000

Country music star Randy Travis took time out from filming a music video in Santa Fe for a photo by Steve Larese.

WE ARE FULL OF MYSTERIES

The Roswell Incident continues to draw fans and doubters alike to see for themselves.

Dennis Balthaser moved to Roswell in 1996 with one goal: to continue his research on UFOs. As a trained civil engineer, his curiosity about extraterrestrial life drew him to what may be the world capital of unexplained activity. For 30 years, Balthaser has led research and conducted witness interviews to investigate the 1947 Roswell Incident. He's also led tours for curious visitors and researchers. Although he recently attempted to retire, the event's 75th anniversary, last July, pulled him back into questions about what happened one July night on a New Mexico ranch. *—As told to Karen Fischer*

It was a sound louder than thunder. That's what a ranch foreman reported hearing about 65 miles north of Roswell. It was an explosion of some kind. The next morning, he went out to check his sheep and property for damage. The debris field was three-quarters of a mile long. Since he didn't know what it was, he contacted the local sheriff. The sheriff didn't know, so he contacted the military.

Debris was driven to Fort Worth, Texas. The military general said, "Put that on my desk." Everyone went into the map room next door, and when they came back, the package wasn't on the desk or on the floor. It was gone. World War II had just ended. Panic would have been a real thing, so the military covered the crash up.

As a researcher, I don't say what happened was aliens. I do know that something happened near Roswell that is still covered up today. There was recently a congressional hearing where representatives admitted that there are things out there we can't explain. From a government entity, that's a big statement to make.

Two of the founders of the International UFO Museum & Research Center were witnesses. We have interviewed over 600 witnesses in 35 years. They were not convinced that the UFO was Russian, Japanese, German, or ours. So who was it? What was their motive for being here?

In 1945, the first atomic bomb was dropped north of White Sands. You could see it from space. Were they out there looking in, wondering what us clowns were doing? Maybe they're just keeping an eye on us, so we don't self-destruct.

Three days after the incident, the *Roswell Daily Record* published a story. That's what's kept the Roswell Incident alive—it went public.

Over 200,000 per year come to see the museum. The interest in Roswell is worldwide. If you mention it anywhere in the world, people associate the town with aliens.

Ninety percent of what people see is explainable. We're interested in that 10 percent that isn't.

▲ Land at the International UFO Museum & Research Center to investigate on your own.

GABRIELLA MARKS

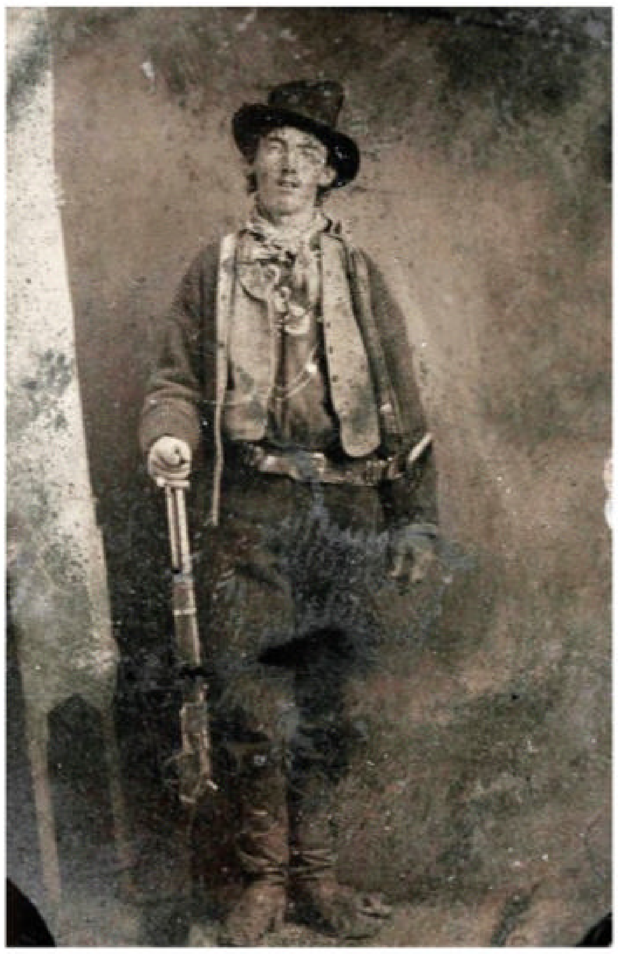
GRAY MATTERS

Ufologist Dennis Balthaser recommends crashing in Roswell for a few days to fuel otherworldly interests.

UFO Festival. "We have a lot of different speakers, researchers, and information provided to the public during the festival," he says of the event, held June 30–July 2 this year. *ufofestival.com*

International UFO Museum & Research Center. "We have what we believe is the second-largest UFO library in the world—the first being at the Vatican," says Balthaser. *roswellufomuseum.com*

Spaceport Roswell. Have a virtual reality experience with the aliens that crashed near Roswell. *spaceportroswellnm.com*



▲ Bill the Kid poses for a ferrotype photo outside a Fort Sumner saloon in 1879 with a Winchester carbine and Colt revolver.

PICTURELUX/THE HOLLYWOOD ARCHIVE/ALAMY

THE KID DEFINES OUR WILD WEST MYTHOLOGY

The charismatic outlaw followed a rough and deadly path through the state. BY GREGORY R.C. HASMAN

Billy the Kid has been dead for more 130 years, but his legacy is alive and well. For many, his name is synonymous with the West, says author and University of New Mexico professor emeritus of history Richard Etulain. People plan trips to Billy the Kid sites like the old Lincoln County Courthouse because they want to see where he once visited, he says. Hit the trail to learn about the Kid.

Billy the Kid Homesite

Also known as Henry McCarty or William H. Bonney (among other names), the charming but deadly outlaw reportedly lived in a Silver City cabin with his mother, Catherine McCarty Antrim, brother Joseph McCarty, and stepfather William Antrim. It was torn down in 1894, but more than a century later director Ron Howard donated an 1870s-style cabin (used in his 2003 movie *The Missing*) to the site. Catherine's grave is at Memory Lane Cemetery.

Billy the Kid Gift Shop

More than a place to buy a souvenir, the Mesilla adobe building was once a general store and housed the Doña Ana County Courthouse and jail. In April 1881, Bonney was tried and convicted at the courthouse for the murder of Sheriff William J. Brady during the Lincoln County War. The war played a role in delaying statehood for New Mexico, says Javier Trost, Lincoln Historic Site interpretive ranger. "People on the coasts and in the Midwest saw us as a territory that was still uncivilized." *nmmag.us/billygiftshop*

Lincoln Historic Site

After the guilty verdict at Mesilla, Bonney was taken to the Lincoln County Courthouse, where he shot and killed deputies James W. Bell and Bob Olinger during a daring escape. The two-story stuccoed adobe structure, built in 1874, now serves as a museum at the Lincoln Historic Site. "It created this mythology of an area that to this day plays a role in what people associate with cowboys, Indians, and gunfighters," says Trost. Attend Old Lincoln Days the first weekend in August for a parade, live music, and a pageant with Billy the Kid reenactors. *nmhistoricsites.org/lincoln*

Billy the Kid Scenic Byway

The 84-mile route includes Fox Cave, a reported hideout, the Billy the Kid Scenic Byway Visitor Center, in Ruidoso Downs, and Fort Stanton Historic Site. *nmmag.us/kidbyway*

Billy the Kid Museum

"This is where he was shot, killed, and buried," says Tim Sweet, owner of the Fort Sumner museum. Opened in 1952, the roadside attraction features an 1873 Winchester that reportedly belonged to Billy as well as two curtains that came out of Pete Maxwell's bedroom, where the Kid was killed by Lincoln County sheriff Pat Garrett in 1881. *nmmag.us/billymuseum*

Old Fort Sumner Cemetery

The end of the line on a Billy the Kid adventure, his grave is locked up behind a black metal fence so he cannot try to escape. "A grave is a final representation of a person," Etulain says. "The dates on the gravestone, the words on the stone, and the place—Fort Sumner—are bits and pieces of the ideas and images we have about Billy the Kid." *nmmag.us/billygrave*

NEW MEXICO
KID FEVER
BILLY THE KID

ON THE COVER

June 1990

Mark Nohl photographed a collage of Billy the Kid memorabilia, including a circa 1976 bourbon decanter.

OUR GHOST TOWNS CONTAIN MULTITUDES

The author of *Abandoned New Mexico* finds meaning in our oft-forgotten places.

John M. Mulhouse misses the uniquely eerie vibes of a New Mexico ghost town. Though he now lives in Oklahoma, the historian and author is nostalgic for the decade he spent traipsing around the little-known corners of New Mexico, documenting old and forgotten towns for his City of Dust blog. His research and photography culminated in the 2020 book *Abandoned New Mexico: Ghost Towns, Endangered Architecture, and Hidden History*, now in its second printing. New Mexico is the ideal place for ghost town hunting, he says, because of its long, diverse history and a mild climate that helps to preserve stone and earthen buildings. *—As told to Molly Boyle*

A lot of ghost towns are foundational to the settlement of the state. Initially, people came for things like mining or agriculture or the railroad or Route 66. Some of these places were pretty hard to put down roots in, and that's why some of them became ghost towns.

Out on the eastern plains, for example, it was tough to make a go with ranching and agriculture. When the Dust Bowl came, that really pushed a lot of people out.

There's still an atmosphere to these ghost towns. If you're quiet and the wind picks up a little bit and the sun's going down, you can feel the history.

There's a place in Negra, for example, the Williams homestead. The Taiban church is another one. For whatever reason, you can feel this energy. I don't know if mystical is the word.

You don't see the same kind of preservation of old buildings in other states. That's just because of the climate, the low humidity, and the way things were constructed. I think the low population density in a lot of places means these structures just haven't been messed with.

I do encourage people to read up on the history before going to a ghost town. A lot of times, I took pictures of buildings and didn't know what they were. And once I started to research the building, I'd be like, *Wow, that happened here*. Like the store in Duran where there was a murder that led to the last hanging in the state.

Everyone in these places—and people do still live there—has a story to tell both in terms of the individuals that lived there and then the broader story of the settlements of New Mexico.

New Mexico is really a state like no other. The history is extensive. Native American, Spanish, Mexican, Wild West, European settlement—you've got it all.

FOLSOM SUPPLY C
GENERAL MERCHANDISE

▲ A tumbleweed moseys down the once-busy streets of Folsom, on the Dry Cimarron Scenic Byway.

ANDREW KORNYLAK

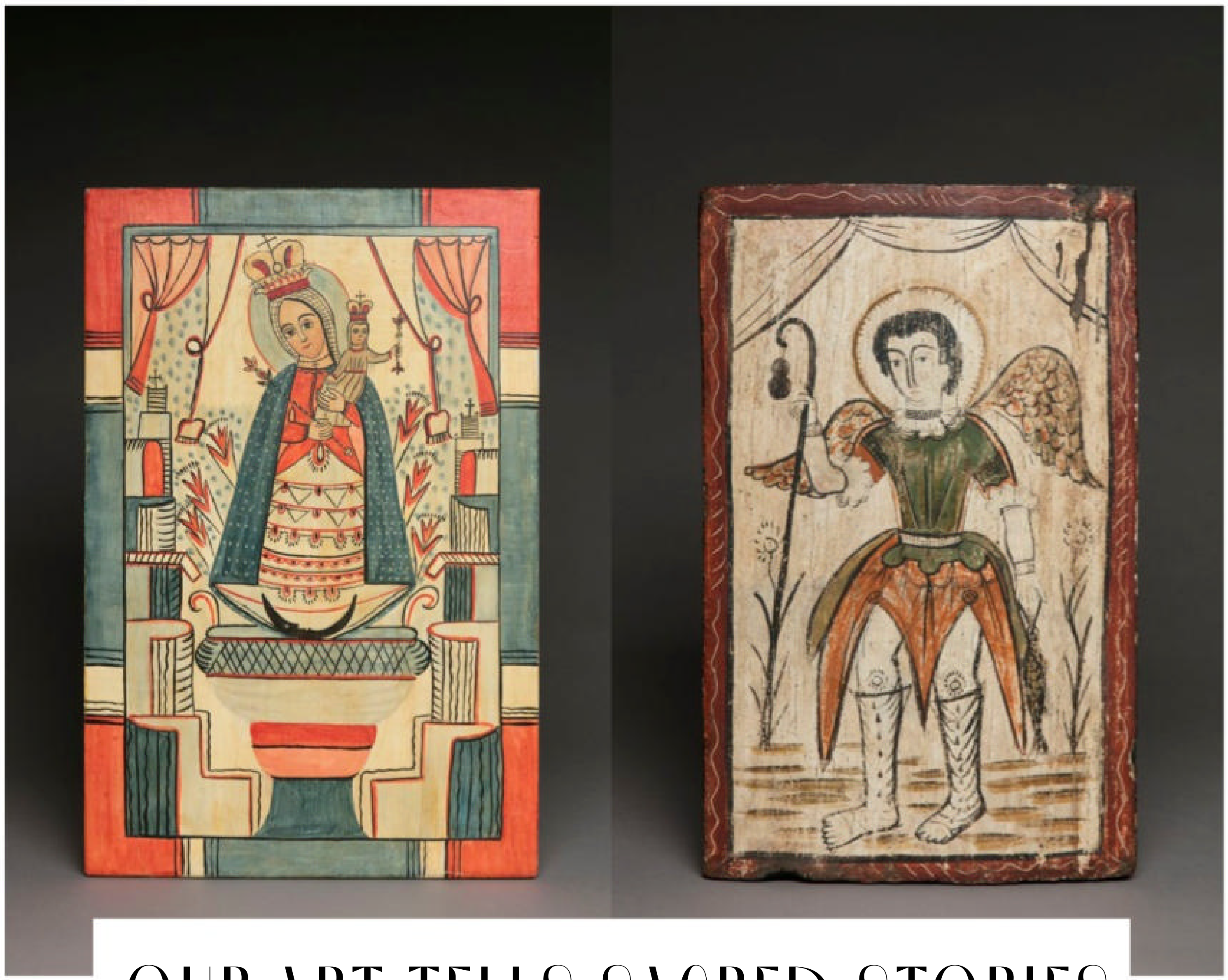
DON'T GET HAUNTED

John M. Mulhouse shares some tips for going to a ghost town.

Be respectful. "A true ghost town is pretty hard to find. In most of these places, you'll still find some people," he says. "That's their home, and you have to be aware of that." Observe private property. "You can take a lot of pictures from the public right-of-way."

Do your homework. Read about the town and know why people settled there. "If people are still there, someone will come up and talk to you," Mulhouse says. "It's good to know a little bit already, because you want to have those conversations."

Go far and wide. Mulhouse recommends locations around the state. In the northeast, stroll the remnants of Elizabethtown. "Yeso is fairly intact," he says. "It feels like you just drove into 1915 or something." He also likes Guadalupe, in the Río Puerco Valley. "There's something really evocative about that area."



OUR ART TELLS SACRED STORIES

One of the state's most renowned santeras reflects on her career in the uniquely New Mexican art form. **BY MARIE ROMERO CASH**

The art of the santero, or maker of saintly images, is believed to have begun around 1760 in colonial New Mexico. Franciscan priests, charged with the task of establishing Christianity on the frontier, worked with local artisans to provide the holy images needed for worship and decoration in the newly built adobe churches. The santeros made retablos, painted images on hand-adzed pine panels, and carved three-dimensional bultos, both of which were then gessoed and painted with native pigments.

Most of us Santa Fe santeros did not grow up seeing old santos in our churches, since most were decorated with large plaster-of-paris figures depicting Saint Joseph or Saint Anthony. My first introduction to the older images was the result of a survey of northern New Mexican churches in the late 1980s, when photographer Jack Parsons and I documented the historic santero art. At the time, I felt the radiant beauty of the faces on some of these bultos was certainly reminiscent of a woman's touch: perfectly arched eyebrows, well-formed lashes and lips, a touch of cheek color. *Ah, one could only wonder.*

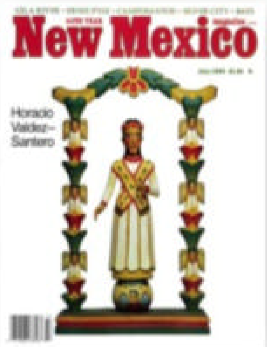
Although researchers have no evidence that women participated in the creation of this art during the colonial period, it certainly became a reality in the 1970s in Santa Fe. During that decade, several women became santeras, including my late sister Anita Romero Jones, Monica Halford, and Gloria Lopez Cordova. I, too, began to follow in the footsteps of the 19th-century artists by establishing myself as a saint maker, a career that would follow me for almost half a century. Today there is an impressive number of women artists who are honored to carry that title.

Before I was a santera, I worked as a legal secretary. I had never considered becoming an artist, and my transformation came about quite serendipitously. After being away for seven years, I returned to my birthplace of Santa Fe. For almost a decade, my parents, Emilio and Senaida Romero, had been well-known tinsmiths, working out of their home. In their own way, they helped to reestablish that traditional art, joined later by two of my brothers, Bobby and Jimmy Romero.

After assisting them at the annual Spanish Market that year, I tried my hand at painting retablos, experimenting

▲ **From left:** Our Lady of Talpa, Marie Romero Cash, circa 1986. San Rafael Arcangel, Pedro Antonio Fresquis, circa 1800.

COURTESY OF PEYTON WRIGHT GALLERY



ON THE COVER

July 1986

Master santero Horacio Valdez's *Inmaculada Concepción* was photographed by Mark Nohl.

with acrylics and then watercolor paints. I went from being somewhat of a copyist, relying on published photos and museum collections, to developing my own style, which was far more colorful than those of earlier artists. My greatest influences were the collections of the Museum of International Folk Art and the Colorado Springs Fine Arts Center, along with the Larry Frank collection, all of which I was fortunate to have explored many times. I look back on some of my early paintings and I can see the progression from a somewhat primitive style to something a bit more refined. As the years passed, my art became my full-time occupation. Early on, I noticed that most of the woodcarvers and retablo painters were men; women were outnumbered ten to one. It was heartening to see, little by little, these numbers changing every year at Spanish Market. Eventually the ratio evened out.

I received commissions to create large altar screens for churches at El Rito, Ojo Caliente, Arroyo Hondo, and other communities in northern New Mexico. Perhaps the highlight of my career was being chosen to create 15 painted panels of the Stations of the Cross for Santa Fe's Cathedral Basilica of St. Francis of Assisi in 1997. As a local artist and as a woman, to be commissioned to create art that was destined to remain in situ for generations to come was mind-boggling. These stations have now been viewed by tens of thousands of visitors.

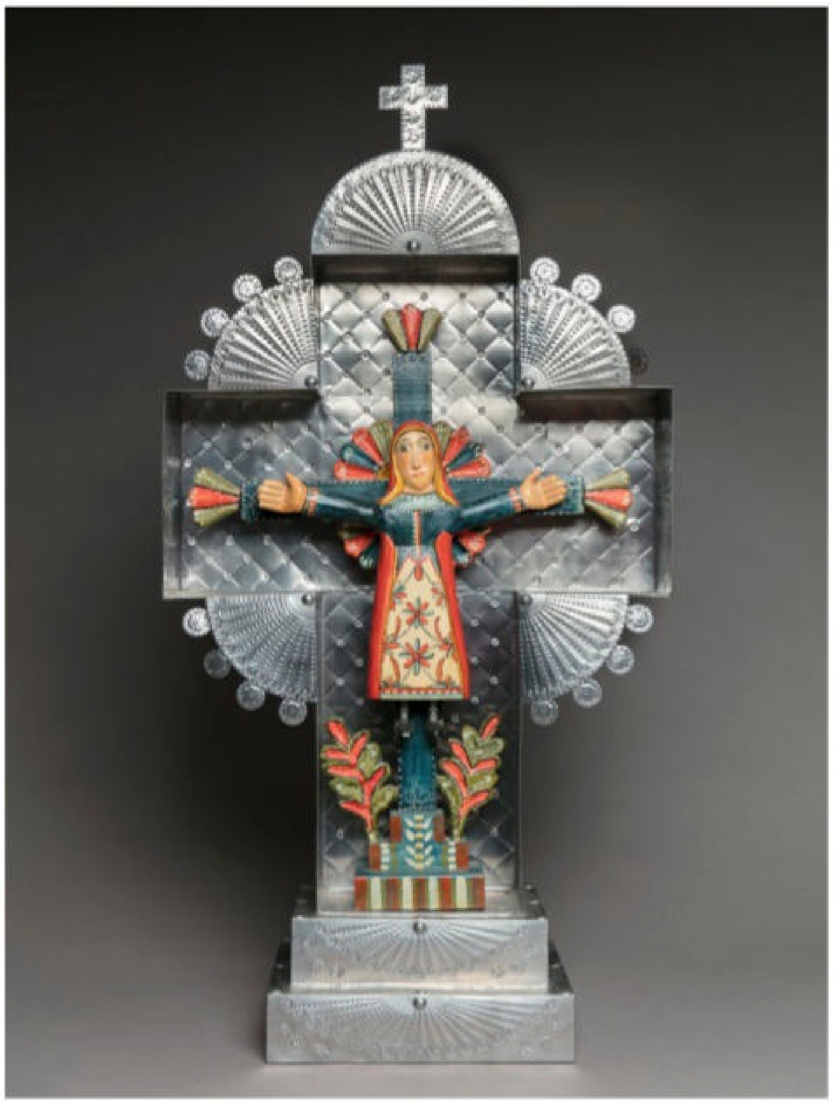
WE HAVE ALWAYS CREATED ART

> "Places like the Wheelwright have been integral in creating connections with Native American artists. In the 1930s, the Studio School program at the Santa Fe Indian School created masters of contemporary Native art. Indigenous artists work to protect our collective memory through their creativity and their agency. New Mexicans and the Indigenous people have always made objects that reflect their narrative and their worldview—and they've always created art."
>
> —ANDREA HANLEY (NAVAJO), CHIEF CURATOR, THE WHEELWRIGHT MUSEUM OF THE AMERICAN INDIAN

That someone might find peace and comfort in viewing my work was always far more important to me than whether it was "pretty" or "well done." I am particularly fond of the 12th station, in which I chose to honor my family by incorporating the names of my ancestors, my parents, my siblings and their families, and my children and grandchildren. What appears to be white lace on Mary's veil actually contains a prayer for myself and for all who enter the cathedral. The prayer is written in Spanish, and although it is not visible from the aisles, I know it is there.

The art of the santero is an important part of New Mexico's traditions and central to the spirituality of many New Mexicans. Over the years, other local churches have embraced santero art, to the delight of both visitors and parishioners. Through my efforts and those of other women artists who continue to perpetuate the art, I believe we honor not only our city but also our families and those young artists who hopefully will follow in our footsteps. It is a tradition worth keeping alive, cultivating, and bringing into the public light.

Marie Romero Cash *is a book author and folk artist based in Santa Fe.*



COURTESY OF PEYTON WRIGHT GALLERY

◀ A carved bulto of Santa Librada in tin nicho, Marie Romero Cash, 1982, Boeckman Collection.

WE ARE MADE OF STORIES, PRAYERS, AND SONGS

A poet who grew up in Shiprock learned from her elders how to tell stories. **BY LUCI TAPAHONSO**

Cool breezes drifted into the bedroom this morning, where the drapes swayed slightly—a hint of impending rain hung in the air. The scents of lilac blooms and cedar and juniper trees drifted inside, immersing us in early-morning sounds and the promise of a beautiful day.

Later, on my morning walk, tiny lizards skittered across my path. One paused to regard me before darting off into the brush. Then a thin rabbit scampered out from under a cedar tree, leaving small dust clouds fluttering as it leaped over weeds and between rocks. Two tiny red birds landed on a branch. As I neared them, they flew ahead and landed on a piñon tree. I talked to them, calling them “little ones” or “sweeties” in Navajo, as I would my grandchildren. This exchange continued for a while—they seemed to wait for me each time they lit on trees alongside the trail.

Doves cooed nearby, reminding me of my childhood at our cabin in the Carrizo Mountains, west of Shiprock. My father would say, “Hasbídí aní, the doves are talking.” We would pause and listen. He taught us to be observant and to pay attention to everything around us.

Decades later, such memories still sustain me. Public utilities were unavailable in Shiprock during the 1950s and ’60s, when I grew up in a multigenerational household. We lived on a farm surrounded by cousins, uncles, aunts, and elder relatives. We saw our cousins as siblings and our aunts and uncles as “our little fathers” or “little mothers.” Elders were grandparents.

We called everyone by relation, and our siblings by nicknames. We didn’t know we had “official” or “white” names. This resulted in some memorable stories. Little Sister insisted in kindergarten that her name was Nimasi (Potato), not Marilynn. We siblings were called to verify that she was indeed Marilynn, while Nimasi burst into tears! We consoled her before returning to our classrooms.

Daily life consisted of prayers, age-appropriate farm and household tasks, songs for the animals, and meals that included sharing stories, jokes, teasing, and laughing. The adults told stories, songs, and jokes that were woven into everyday tasks. We learned ceremonial protocol, how to talk respectfully, and our relatives demonstrated compassion and optimism with a sense of humor.

They told us that our primordial deity, Changing Woman, created us. We are her descendants, who live now as Earth Surface People, protected above by our father, the sky, and supported by our mother, the Earth. Changing Woman bound the first four clans to various locations in Diné Bikéyah, Navajo Country. Thus we are matrilineal people, and my clans, Tódik'ozhí (Salt Water People) and Tódích'ii'nii (Bitter Water People), are associated with distinct places and with specific animals as our protectors.

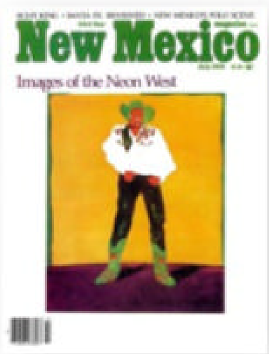
They said that we are made of prayers, stories, and songs, and that the Diyin Dine'é, the Holy Ones, are sentient in plants, birds, animals, and all living things.

Our sacred mountain in the east, Hesperus Peak, is visible from our home, as is the Shiprock pinnacle, to the west. Shiprock seems to be at the edge of our fields; she is our guardian, because she saved our ancestors from a flood centuries ago. We see her daily in the distance, sometimes draped in snow, other times glistening with rain, enveloped in clouds of mist. Her sharp outline was most often distinct against the vast blue sky. She takes on muted hues throughout the day: a pale mix of pink and yellow at dawn, a dark blue-purple at midday, and layers of light red, soft blue, and pink streaks at dusk. Up close, the jagged peaks are dark brown, then drift into a mix of coral, beige, and gray.

Our teachings are memorialized by the concept of *saad*, which is the guiding knowledge or wisdom in the songs, prayers, stories, and teachings. Although saad was given to us at the beginning of Navajo time, it is relevant today. It is said that the Holy Ones knew

▶ A Cochiti Pueblo potter shows off her storyteller figures in Santa Fe.

PALACE OF THE GOVERNORS PHOTO ARCHIVES, NEW MEXICO HISTORY MUSEUM, SANTA FE, NEW MEXICO(# HP.2014.14.2039)



ON THE COVER

July 1985

Fritz Scholder’s *Hollywood Cowboy in Roma* graced the cover for a story on artists making the Wild West chic.

we would face challenges in this present glittering world. Saad lives on in us, helps us face threats, and, most importantly, urges us to remember all we've been taught and to impart this knowledge to our children and grandchildren. It reinforces our relationships and responsibilities to one another and the land.

These gentle teachings of my parents', siblings', and relatives' stories became the literary inspirations that led to my being appointed the first poet laureate of the Navajo Nation in 2013. I honor their lives and the love they bestowed on me.

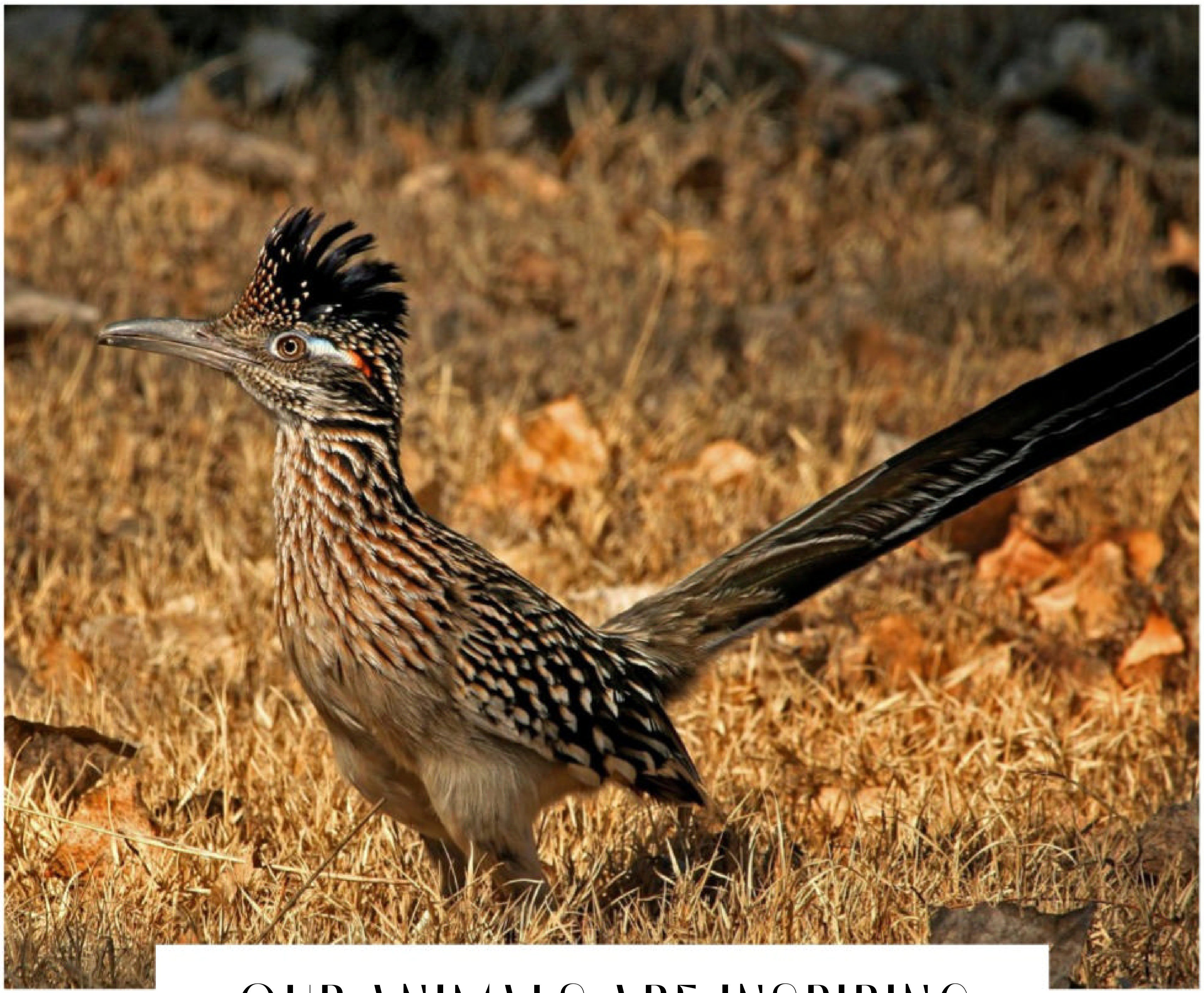
Then as now, the smell of rain always fills us with gratitude. On clear afternoons, we can see the misty slants of rain and billowing clouds approaching from the west. Then the air becomes saturated with the scents of fresh wet dirt and damp juniper and piñon trees. This is how we know that the Holy Ones remember us.

Luci Tapahonso *is professor emerita of creative writing at the University of New Mexico.*

OUR OUTDOOR COOKING IS FIRE

"Part of Pueblo culture and tradition, the horno has been used for cooking and baking for centuries. The concept was brought over by the Spaniards, who taught Pueblo women how to build, maintain, and use the outdoor, beehive ovens made of adobe. Today they're used throughout the pueblos of New Mexico to bake bread, Indian pies, and cookies and to roast our corn and meat. I use cedar or juniper, because the smokiness adds to the flavor."

—NORMA NARANJO, OWNER OF THE FEASTING PLACE, WHICH OFFERS CLASSES AT OHKAY OWINGEH PUEBLO



▲ With its long tail and impressive crest, the roadrunner makes a great subject for folklore and cartoons.

OUR ANIMALS ARE INSPIRING

Las Cruces–based artist Cōllette uses roadrunners, whiptail lizards, and other desert inhabitants in her artworks big and small.

Cōllette was born in Las Cruces, and the Chihuahuan Desert environment influences her artistic practice. The Xicana artist of Indigenous descent uses crisp lines, meticulous detail, and warm colors (think orange, gold, burnt umber, and terracotta) to depict New Mexico flora and fauna. An oversize song sparrow sits on an agave bloom in the aesthetic treatment she designed for Las Cruces' I-25/University Avenue interchange. In a similar project, for Williamsburg's I-25 overpass, Cōllette portrayed a rattlesnake and a quail. For the New Mexico Department of Cultural Affairs' alphabet coloring book, Cōllette illustrated the letter Q with a quail. She worked a rattlesnake into the Monumental Loop's identity mark and added a roadrunner and a centipede to the design on its official bike-frame bag. A roadrunner and a rabbit made their way into her public art commission at the New Mexico Department of Workforce Solutions' Tiwa Building, in Albuquerque, and more work will be exhibited at the city's Lapis Room in the fall. Her lips are sealed about a pending collaboration with an outdoors company. —*As told to Jennifer C. Olson*

◆

ON THE COVER

September 1937

A New Mexico goat stars in a shot by Wyatt Davis for this issue featuring "Shepherds on Horseback."

ALAMY/MATTHEW SILEO

▲ Cöllette draws on her environment for projects like the I-25 interchange.

JAY HEMPHILL

I identify as multiracial with Indigenous, Native, and Spanish ancestry. My grandfather carved objects from willow and pecan trees on his property, and also grew and painted gourds. My grandma nurtured our familia with food and encouraged my artistic talents by providing supplies and space to create. On their farm, my primos and I rode bikes, played in the ditches, caught tadpoles, chased chickens, climbed trees, made mud pies, and planted in the garden.

From third to sixth grade, I attended seven elementary schools in four states. I felt like I didn't fit in anywhere. Those challenging years shaped who I am as a person and as an artist. My work is a reflection of different aspects of who I am. These aspects are visually communicated through imagery layered with personal symbolism of memories, emotions, dreams, my culture, or my sacred relationship with the land and its inhabitants. This relationship has played a significant role in my work since childhood.

Instead of including the state bird on the New Mexico Department of Transportation infrastructure in Las Cruces, I opted for the state reptile. The whiptail lizard is an all-female species that reproduces asexually through a process called parthenogenesis—a cool fact most people don't know.

Animals and I have a mutual respect. Animals have a pureness to them. They are straightforward and easier to connect with than people. There were so many horny toads in this area when I was growing up; now you are lucky to spot one. The beloved roadrunner (aka el paisano and chaparral cock) is the badass of the bird world, because they prey on snakes and the tarantula hawk wasp. I just think javelina are super cute. My dearest animal companion of all is Pantera, my medium-haired black gato.

WILD ART

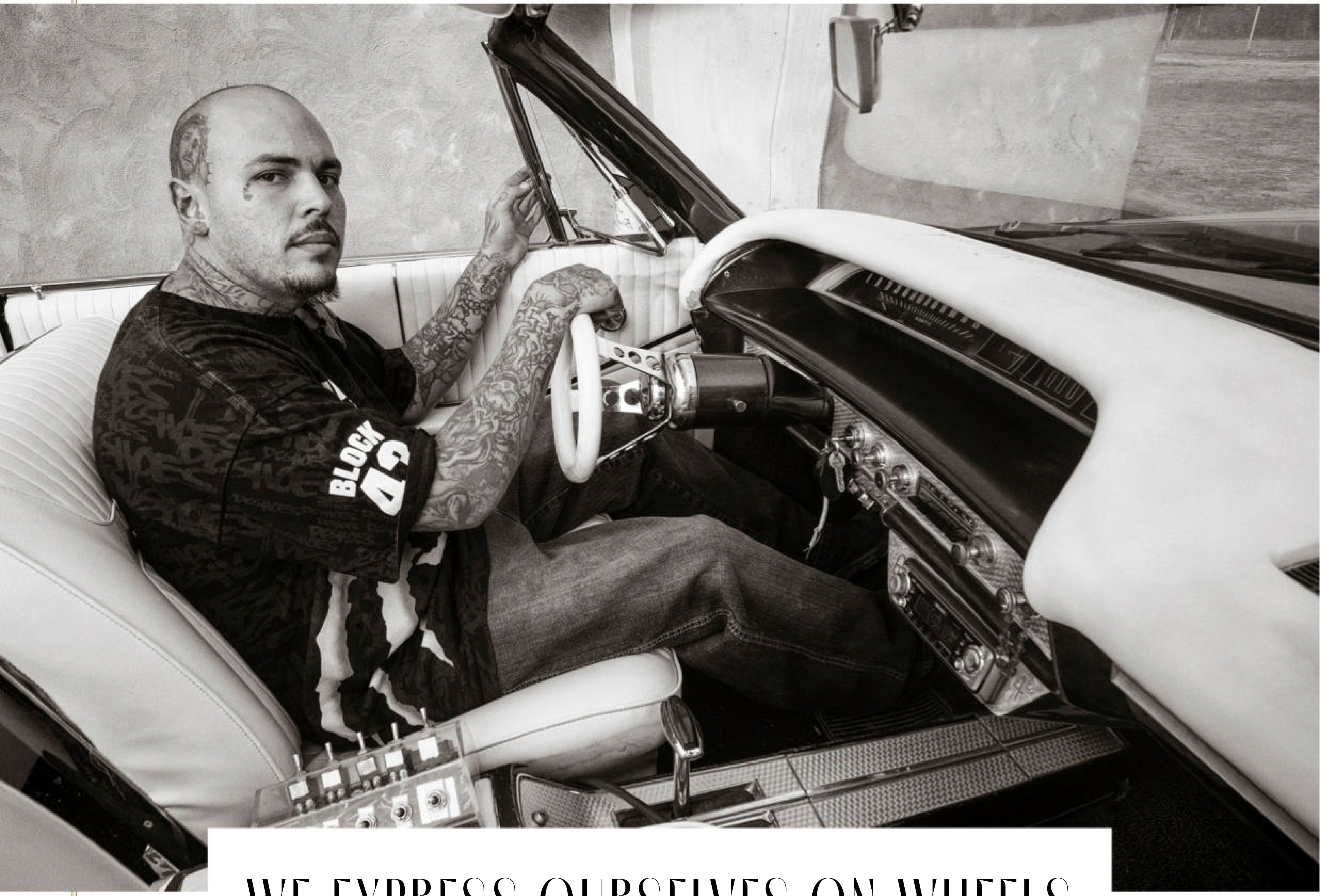
Explore how animals have served as subjects for art throughout the centuries.

Indian Pueblo Cultural Center. The Albuquerque museum's *Birds and Feathers* exhibit explores winged creatures' inclusion in pottery, clothing, and homes. *indianpueblo.org*

Petroglyph National Monument. A hundred petroglyphs, including a distinct macaw, can be seen on a walk at Boca Negra Canyon, in Albuquerque. *nps.gov/petr/index.htm*

A:shiwi A:wan Museum and Heritage Center. Learn about Zuni carved stone animal fetishes, which serve ceremonial purposes. *ashiwi-museum.org*

Western New Mexico University Museum. The Mimbres Mogollon people depicted deer, rabbits, lizards, and quail more than humans on their painted pottery, also integrating turkey feathers into geometric designs. "We see it as art but realize it's a reflection of their worldview, environment, and culture," says museum director Danielle Romero. *museum.wnmu.edu*



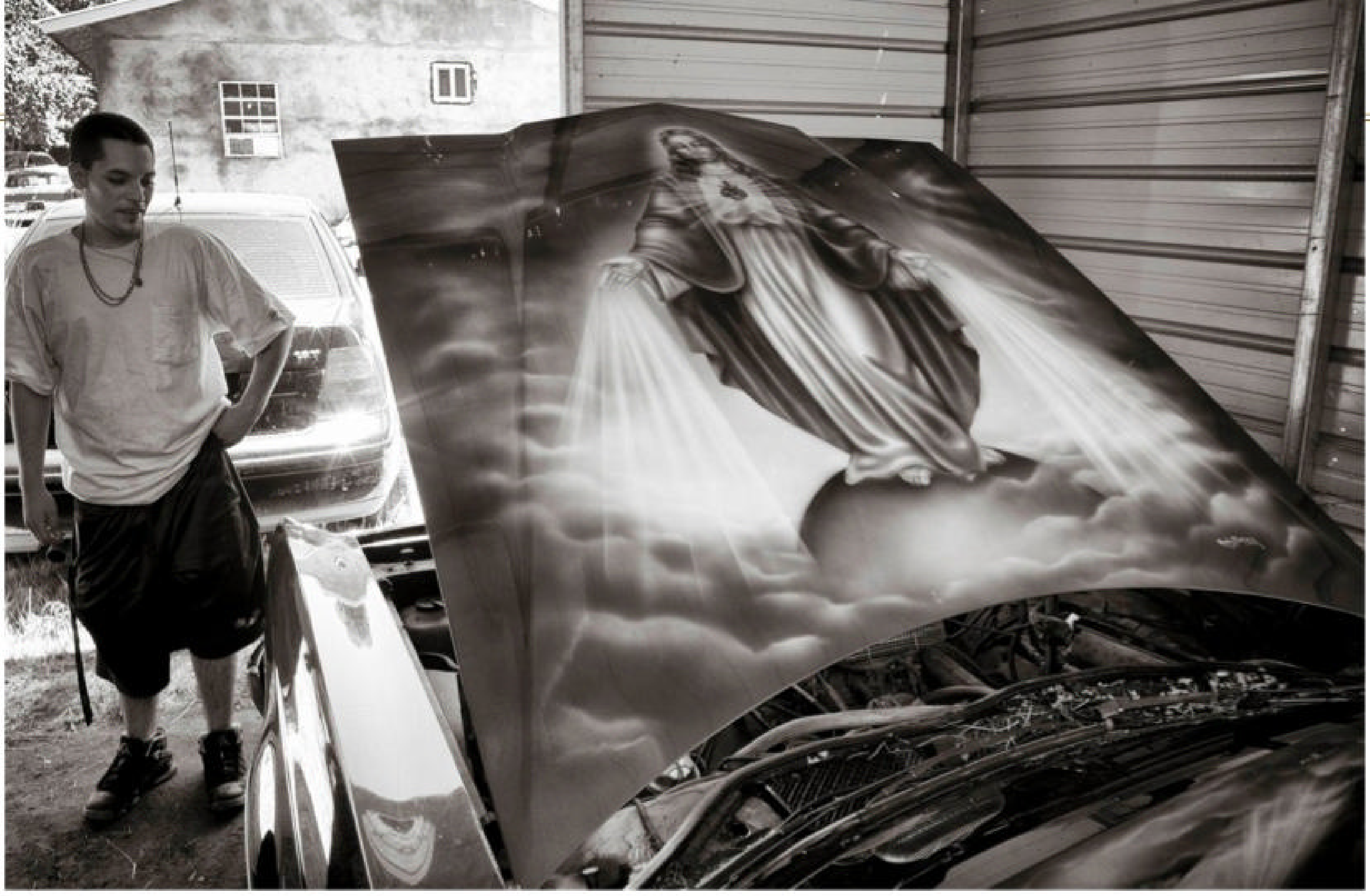
WE EXPRESS OURSELVES ON WHEELS

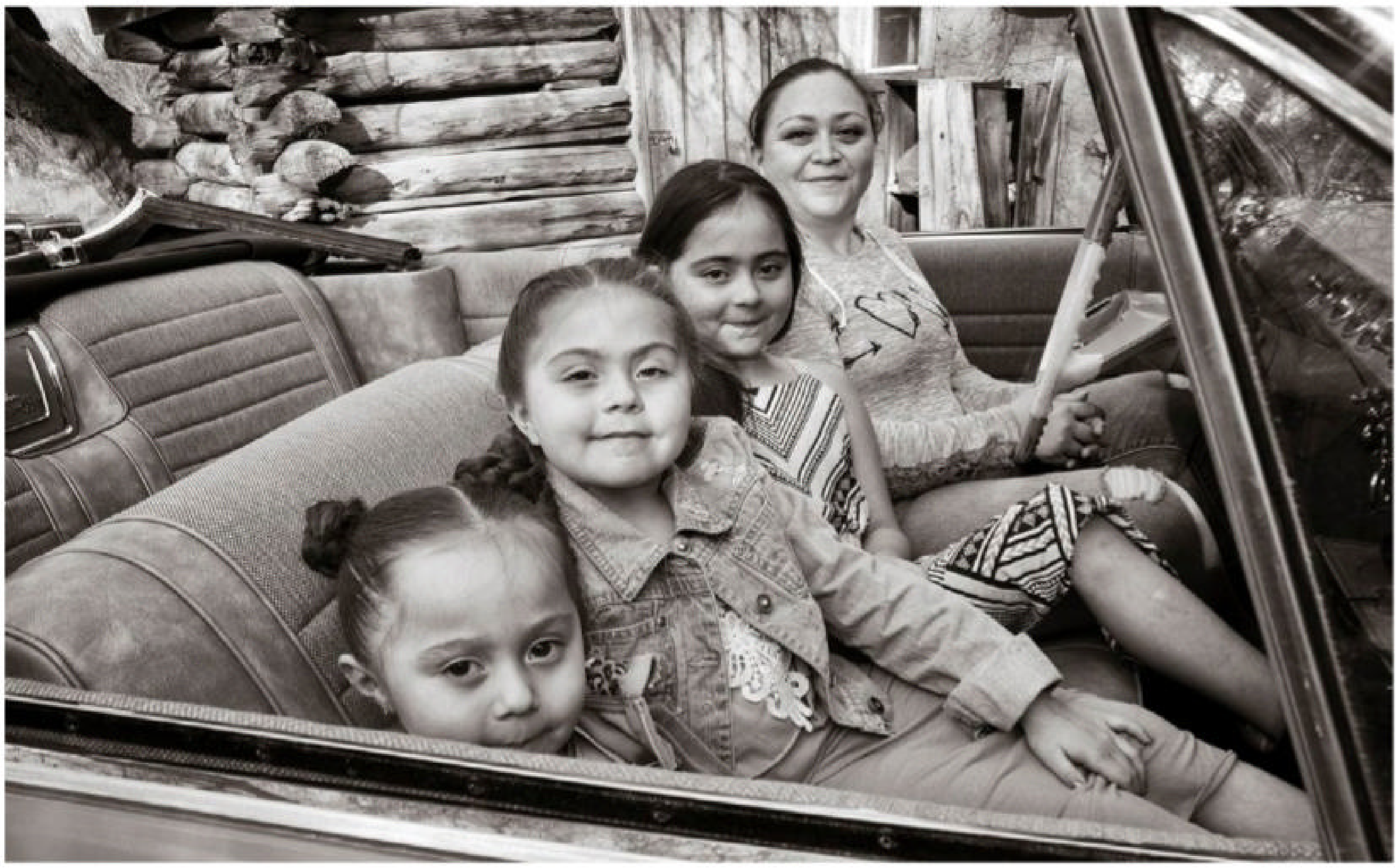
Lowriding through Chimayó is a sacred tradition.

STORY AND PHOTOGRAPHS BY DON J. USNER

As a child spending summers in Chimayó with my grandmother, I felt a great deal of excitement about the lowriders that rolled by on the dirt roads on weekends and during the annual Good Friday cruise, their V-8s rumbling as they passed. Grandma warned me to steer clear of them, but I was transfixed by the anachronistic, slow-motion passage of ornate, gleaming chrome—not to mention the slicked-back hair and streetwise panache of the drivers. As an adult, when I began to write books and articles about the village of Chimayó, I realized that the cars and the distinctive subculture surrounding them are an important expression of cultural identity. I knew that they would have to be part of the stories I wrote.

▲ **From top:** Elmo Sanchez poses in Bobby Chacon's 1964 Impala in front of a Penitente morada in Chimayó in 2015. Elmo belongs to a fraternity of lowriders, Los Guys, who get together to cruise and show off their rides. Christopher Martinez hangs out in his 1953 Cadillac in Chimayó, 2015.

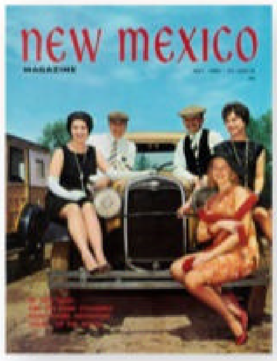




◀ **From top:** Leroy Martinez stands beside his Cadillac lowrider in Chimayó in 2015. The mural on its hood was created by one of Chimayó's most renowned car muralists, Randy Martinez, in the early 2000s. Lowriders sometimes add religious imagery to their paint jobs, an outgrowth of the centuries-long tradition of religious folk art in northern New Mexico. For the Chacon girls (from left, Bobbie, Heaven, and Angel) and their mother, Pam Jaramillo—posing here in their 1961 Impala at the Chimayó Museum in 2016—lowriding is a family affair. Long before any of them could drive, each girl laid claim to a family-owned lowrider of her own. Cruising with other lowriders is a regular ritual where families and friends come together to share their love of these special cars.

Don J. Usner *is a writer and photographer who grew up in Los Alamos and Chimayó. His many books include* ¡Orale! Lowrider: Custom Made in New Mexico.

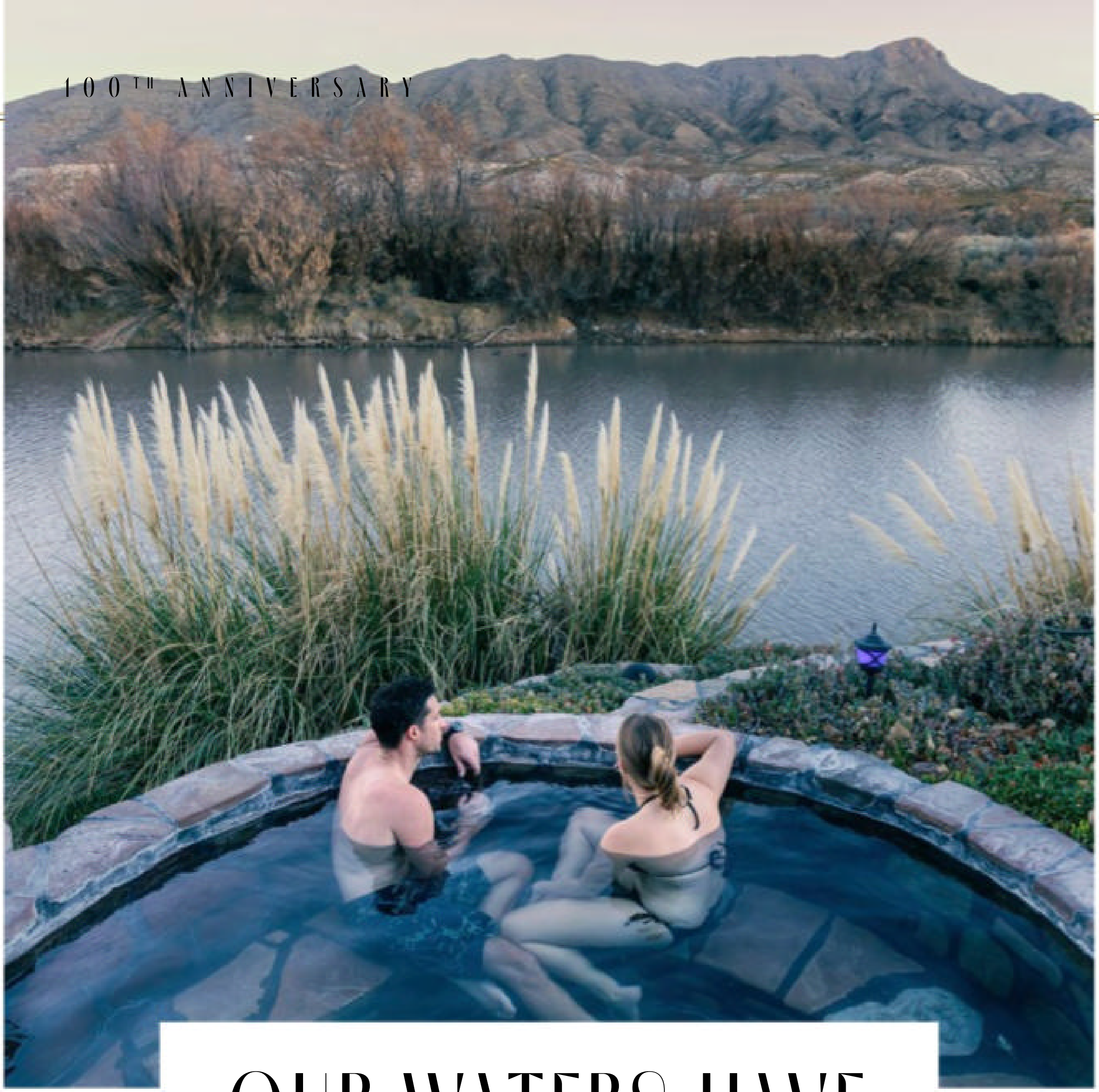
> THE OLD ONES SHOW UP IN OUR ARCHAEOLOGY
>
> Looking into the Indigenous past is a vital way to look at, especially in New Mexico, the diversity of Native peoples' history. Archaeology is the best way to see into these pasts. We have lots of those areas in the state—Chaco Canyon, Aztec Ruins. But here at Zuni, we also have our own set of ancient villages that were once our homes. Many people coming here don't realize the diverse history of America. Talking about our past and the history of the Southwest gives people a much better perspective. It shows visitors that this is still who we are.
>
> —KENNY BOWEKATY, ARCHAEOLOGIST AND TOUR GUIDE, ZUNI PUEBLO



ON THE COVER

May 1966

Ralph Looney captured costumed members of the Poco Quatros Model A Club on a 1931 Model A.



OUR WATERS HAVE HEALING POWERS

For Jake Foerstner, New Mexico bubbles with the right mix of natural elements and soothing energy.

Think being the owner of a hot springs resort in one of New Mexico's most laid-back towns is some kind of dream job? Jake Foerstner would heartily agree. Since 2006, he's been the proud proprietor of Riverbend Hot Springs, in Truth or Consequences. The constellation of 17 common and private pools, ranging from 95 to 108 degrees, perches above the Río Grande across from majestic Turtleback Mountain. The chill vibe surrounding the springs goes back hundreds of years, Foerstner says, dating to the ancient Mimbres and Apache people. In recent years, T or C has boosted its reputation as a hub for wellness, with massage therapists and yogis joining some of the 10 or so hot springs resorts in the town's historic bath district.

—As told to Tracy Dingmann

What's special about New Mexico thermal springs is their history of being used traditionally by Native people. They were considered sacred, neutral areas. There was never a conflict between any tribes over them. Today people come here and interact peacefully. This is a stress-free zone.

Where we are, at the southern tip of the Rockies, there is so much geothermal activity, and you can enjoy it at a good mix of natural springs and resorts. At Riverbend, our waters have more than three dozen overall dissolved solids. We're the richest in the world.

I've been thrilled to witness our town's renaissance as a healing destination. There's a synergy that I feel building like no other that I've felt in the past 35 years.

To me, New Mexico has always felt like a bubble of creativity and weirdness floating in a sea of the ordinary. Riverbend's bohemian roots as a youth hostel, coupled with its idyllic location, give it that same laid-back escape feeling. Our guests have long called it a vacation from their vacation.

▲ Relaxing at Riverbend Hot Springs is like soaking in a warm infinity pool in the desert.

SOAK IT IN

These hot springs do a mind and body good.

Ojo Spa Resorts. At Ojo Caliente Mineral Springs Resort and Spa, in Ojo Caliente, enjoy iron, arsenic, soda, and lithia waters in a rustic yet luxurious setting. At its sister spa, Ojo Santa Fe, get poolside food-and-drink service in an oasis of spring-fed pools. *ojosparesorts.com*

Spence Hot Spring. Near Jemez Springs, this natural hot spring is perched high on a mountainside, where geothermal water cascades from the source in a series of pools with views of the Santa Fe National Forest. *nmmag.us/spencehotspring*

Jemez Hot Springs. The former Giggling Hot Springs resort, near Jemez Springs, features four therapeutic mineral pools heated by water from beneath Valles Caldera National Preserve. *jemezhotsprings.com*

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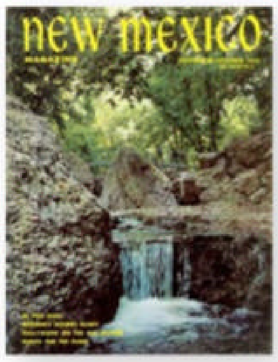

ON THE COVER

Sept./Oct. 1969

Keith Kofford photographed Whitewater Creek ("one of the prettiest areas for exploring") near Silver City.

TIRA HOWARD

OUR TRACKS TAKE YOU BACK IN TIME

Climb aboard the Cumbres & Toltec Scenic Railroad for a trip you'll never forget.

Built in 1880 to haul silver pulled from mines in the San Juan Mountains, the Cumbres & Toltec Scenic Railroad offers riders a trip to the past. The narrow-gauge railroad takes a scenic ride from Chama, New Mexico, through canyons and alpine meadows to Antonito, Colorado. The locomotive is even a movie star, featured in films like *Indiana Jones and the Last Crusade*, in 1989, and 2014's *A Million Ways to Die in the West*. Rich Casford, risk officer at the railroad and team member for more than 20 years, has many highlights of riding the rails. *—As told to Maria Manuela*

The number one thing I think about when I'm riding the line is how they built this railroad in 1880. Everything had to be carried on mules and in wagons. It's remarkable how strong the people really were. They had no fear.

When we have big trains, we add a helper locomotive. That's called a doubleheader. We have people who like to chase the train along NM 17 and take pictures of it. It's very rare in 2023 to see a doubleheader steam locomotive train.

The railroads across the United States actually made the country what we are today. When they built the transcontinental railroad, they kicked off from Omaha, on the east, and Sacramento, on the west, and built toward each other. Building that railroad tied the country together.

Our railroad, the Cumbres & Toltec Scenic Railroad, was part of the Denver and Río Grande Western Railroad, built by William Jackson Palmer. His goal was to build from Denver all the way to Mexico City.

I like the trip in the spring, watching Mother Nature come back to life, the meadows particularly. If you get up there in May, the meadows are just starting to blossom, and by mid-June they're emerald green. In the fall, it's spectacular with the aspens. The sky is blue, and you are completely isolated from modern times. Even your cellphone does not work.

A couple of years ago, we had a French movie company here, and I took them out on the train. Their translator turned to me and said, "This is like a John Wayne movie." I told them, "This is the West; nothing has changed since 1880." We have so many beautiful, wide-open spaces.

▲ The Cumbres & Toltec Scenic Railroad has five operating steam locomotives, including the oil-burning No. 489.

NMTD

RAIL TAILS

All aboard for these railroad museums.

Belén Harvey House Museum. Learn more about railroad restaurants and the man who pioneered them, Fred Harvey, through exhibits and historical photographs at this museum. It includes a section on the famed Harvey Girls, who worked in the restaurants. *harveyhousemuseum.org*

Las Cruces Railroad Museum. Located inside the city's historic Santa Fe Railway depot, this museum engages visitors with kid-friendly offerings and exhibits delving into train history. *lascruces.gov/1624/Railroad-Museum*

Tucumcari Railroad Museum. Housed in a Union Station depot built in 1926, this museum focuses on train history in eastern New Mexico. *tucumcarirailroadmuseum.org*

▲ Slow-simmered to perfection, pinto beans are a staple on New Mexican tables.

DOUGLAS MERRIAM

WE CELEBRATE WHAT HAS SUSTAINED US

Wagon Mound Bean Day parade emcee Tom "Dabo" Herrera digs into the significance of our state's longest-running festival.

The Wagon Mound Bean Day Celebration honors one of New Mexico's perennial crops, the pinto bean, which was once abundantly grown on farms surrounding the small village on the plains of northeastern New Mexico. The three-day celebration is jam-packed with a parade, rodeo, car show, horseshoe tournament, live music, dancing, and a big ol' barbecue with beef and—you guessed it—beans. The event sprouted as a Labor Day celebration even before New Mexico was a state. Wagon Mound native Tom "Dabo" Herrera serves as the parade emcee and is a member of the Bean Day Association, which this year puts on the 113th annual Bean Day September 1–4. *—As told to Lynn Cline*

The early Native Americans definitely were eating beans. They're one of the Three Sisters—beans, corn, and squash. But there are no records of what they were growing in this area.

In the mid-1800s, there were two stables in Wagon Mound where the stagecoaches traveling the Santa Fe Trail would come in, one on the western side and the other on the eastern part. I'm sure those passengers ate beans.

My grandfather, born in 1904, was a carpenter who grew beans. Pinto beans were a big crop in the area in the early 1900s. When the Atchison, Topeka and Santa Fe Railway came through in 1879, shipping became a lot easier. Prior to that, shipping was done by horse and cart. According to all the accounts that we get, these pinto beans were shipped all over the place and were sold in grocery stores.

The very first Bean Day was in 1910. That's when they started using wash boilers—huge pots to cook the beans. They set them up behind the school and lit a fire to cook them. Now they dig a pit and put the beans in these huge pots and wrap the meat in foil and cook it all underground.

Beans are still a big thing in New Mexico. I like my mom's recipe for tomato beans. I put some pinto beans to cook, add ground beef already made, and some diced tomatoes. That's my favorite. She got the recipe from her grandmother.

Some people come to Bean Day for the rodeo, but the big thing is on Monday, with the parade and the free barbecue with beef and beans.

EVENT CENTER

Enjoy what makes us great, one festival at a time.

Great American Duck Race. Cheer for your feathered friends as they make a mad dash to the finish line during this Deming festival (August 24–27). *demingduckrace.com*

Pie Town Pie Festival. From a community canning event held 40 years ago to a fete that draws 1,000 people, the Pie Town event (September 9) is a sweet success. *pietownrisingstars.org*

Spirits of New Mexico's Past. Meet the ghosts of colorful figures from New Mexico's history as they share their stories by lantern light and campfire. El Rancho de las Golondrinas hosts this spooky event (October 21). *golondrinas.org*

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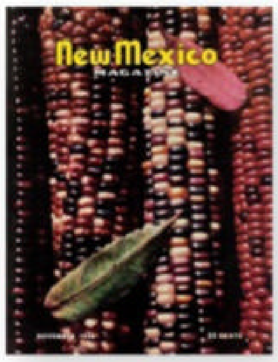

ON THE COVER

November 1956

"Fred H. Ragsdale, who shot the attractive cover photograph [of Indian corn] lives in Boulder, Colorado."

HERE, NATIVE PEOPLE TELL THEIR OWN STORIES

Archivist Diane Bird counters old museum narratives with slices of contemporary Native life.

New Mexico's Indigenous-led institutions, such as the Museum of Indian Arts & Culture, in Santa Fe, extend their expertise nationally, forging lasting partnerships with major museums from coast to coast. Diane Bird (Santo Domingo), the museum's archivist, knows this firsthand, as she was the founding archivist for the Smithsonian Institution's National Museum of the American Indian. Her research and curation are integral to the Museum of Indian Arts & Culture's recently revamped core exhibition, *Here, Now and Always*. The show represents a paradigm shift between cultural institutions and Native people, as museums begin to forge paths based on community curation and collaboration. —*As told to Michael Abatemarco*

▶ Sheila Antonio's (Diné) *Figurine* depicts a beaded World War II code talker.

GIFT OF YARA AND GERALD PITCHFORD, MUSEUM OF INDIAN ARTS & CULTURE/LABORATORY OF ANTHROPOLOGY

The original *Here, Now and Always* showcased many of the objects from our collection. It complemented them with having guest Native curators from the many tribes of the Southwest and showcasing their voice.

It was groundbreaking: the emphasis on Native people today, not just as history. It's very much a contemporary exhibition in a state museum that gave voice to many, many Native Americans.

This time, we still have a representative number of objects from our collections, probably within the same amount of space, but it's a little bit more expansive.

Museums are now doing more outreach to Native peoples. I just finished reading a review for a museum in Colorado and how they had to close down one of their exhibits on Sand Creek. They got remarks from the tribes about things that were incorrect. After consultation with the tribes, they reopened with their involvement.

One of the kinds of things that museums never addressed in the past was that there were Native peoples still alive in their areas. I like to let people who fly into Albuquerque know that they literally passed through seven Native nations on their way to Santa Fe and that right now they're standing on Indian land.

WHERE NATIVE ART BLENDS WITH LIFE

Don't miss these chances to immerse yourself in Indigenous culture.

The annual **Gallup Inter-Tribal Indian Ceremonial** (August 4–13) enters its 101st year with an art show and exhibit hall, its legendary Open to the World Rodeo, and the contest powwow, featuring traditional and contemporary Native dance. *gallupceremonial.com*

Also happening every year for more than a century now, **Santa Fe Indian Market** (August 19–20) draws tourists and Indigenous artists from all over North America to the downtown Plaza. Head to town a few days in advance for other markets, fashion shows, and parties. *swaia.org*

While you're in Santa Fe, see the **Wheelwright Museum of the American Indian**'s current show, *Always in Relation: Artworks from the Schultz Collection* (through October 21), which examines the relationship between collectors and modern and contemporary regional artists, such as Marcus Amerman (Choctaw), Kenneth Begay (Diné), and Teri Greeves (Kiowa). *wheelwright.org*

Named by *USA Today* as the number-three art museum in the U.S., the **Institute of American Indian Arts Museum of Contemporary Native Arts**, in Santa Fe, showcases a stunning breadth of cutting-edge Indigenous art. *iaia.edu/mocna*

New Mexico's 19 pueblos offer plenty of **Native feast days** open to visitors throughout the year. Visit the **Indian Pueblo Cultural Center**, in Albuquerque, to learn more about Pueblo culture. *indianpueblo.org*

The Mexican Magician

Zacatlán Restaurant chef Eduardo Rodriguez brings fresh flair to Santa Fe.

By Lynn Cline

Photographs by **DOUGLAS MERRIAM**

A climb through history.
LOS ALAMOS
NM TRUE
VisitLosAlamos.org

SAVORING THE FANTASTIC FUSION OF Mexican and Southwestern cuisines in the intimate dining room of Zacatlán Restaurant is like enjoying a delightful dinner in the welcoming adobe of a friend who happens to be an exquisite chef.

"I want my guests to feel like they're at home," says Eduardo Rodriguez, the gregarious chef and owner of Zacatlán, which opened in July 2020 in a sweet house tucked away on Aztec Street, in the Santa Fe Railyard District. "I love to make this food. I love to make people happy. I have to cook with my soul and my heart and my passion, and I hope people like it."

Customers are just as passionate about Rodriguez's creations. Shortly after his longtime dream of opening a restaurant came true, *Condé Nast Traveler* called Zacatlán "one of the hottest tickets in town," while *USA Today* named it one of America's top 10 new restaurants. Then came the most prestigious distinction yet: In 2022, Zacatlán was a semifinalist for a James Beard Award in the Best New Restaurant category.

The accolades are apt. As guests begin a meal with a complimentary glass of prosecco, enticing aromas waft from Zacatlán's tiny kitchen, providing the first clue that wizardry is afoot in the back of the house. Out front, servers with genuine smiles deftly deliver plates to guests in the art-filled dining room, where the turquoise petals of a giant flower sculpture bloom above an adobe fireplace. On the enclosed patio, canary-yellow walls festooned with Mexican art, hanging baskets, and ristras suggest a festive mercado.

The fragrant food is as artful as the decor, from appetizers of yellowtail ceviche and stuffed squash blossoms to main dishes like cochinita pibil, a Yucatecan specialty of slow-roasted pork shank with an intoxicating mole coloradito that glistens like black lacquer. Moles negro and poblano get paired with succulent lamb and duck, while pork belly carnitas are drenched in a delectable date mole.

By the time a plate of cinnamon-dusted churros arrives for dessert, neatly stacked and served with a thick, caramelly cajeta for dipping, the evening has become ethereal. Add in a curated selection of award-winning wines from Mexico, and the Zacatlán experience equates to a virtual voyage to Mexico, home of the world's first cuisine to land on UNESCO's Intangible Cultural Heritage List, in 2010.

"I want guests to feel like they're in Mexico, with all my flavors," Rodriguez says. "I want them to be comfortable, with amazing food and amazing service," whether they stop in for brunch Thursday through Sunday, or dinner, served nightly.

In the Nahuatl language of the Aztecs and Toltecs, Zacatlán means "land with an abundance of grass." The restaurant's name pays tribute to the mountain city of Zacatecas, where Rodriguez was born and where his culinary journey began in the family kitchen. "I learned to cook under my

Diana Rodriguez serves diners in the enclosed patio area. **Previous spread:** Chef Eduardo Rodriguez is earning accolades for his work.

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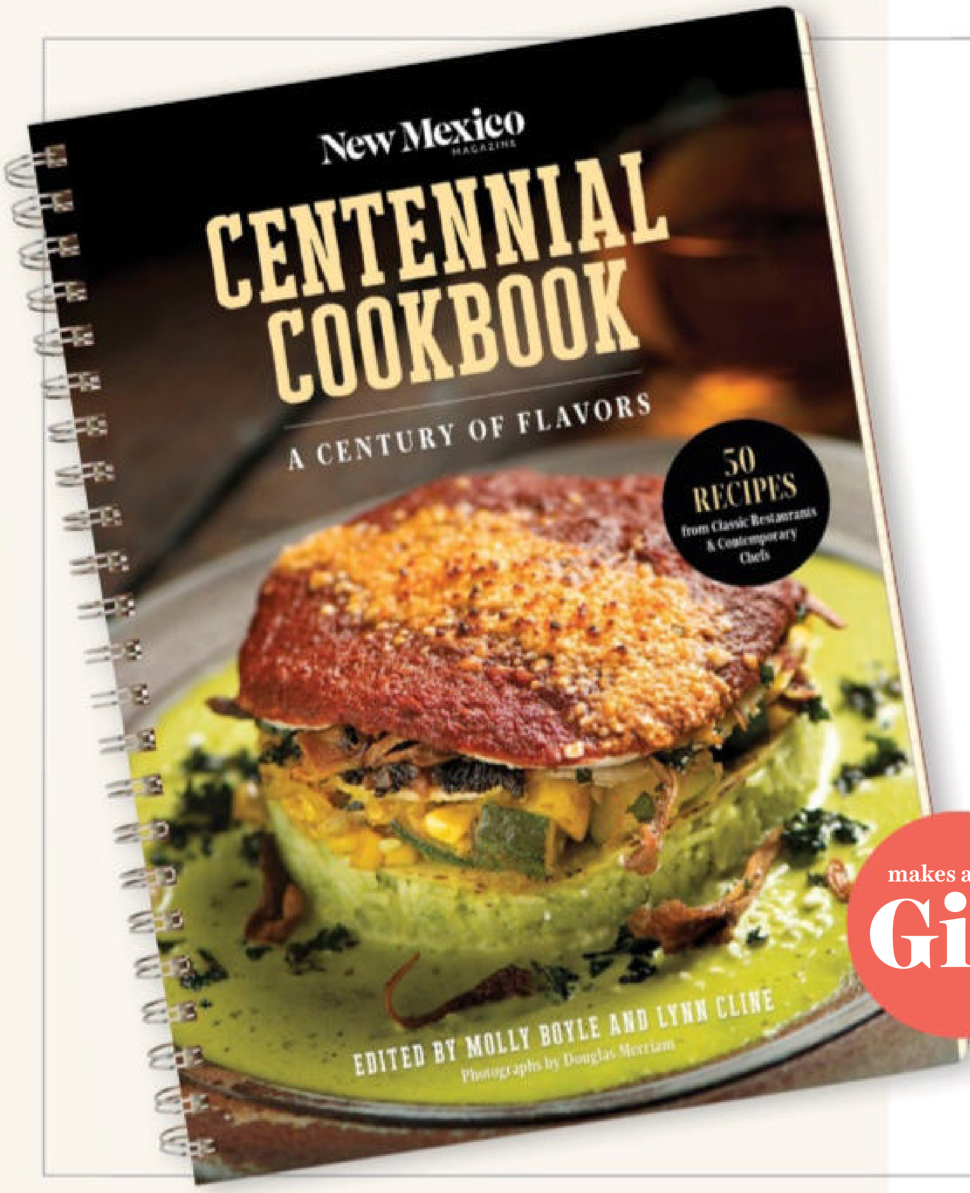
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Photographs by Douglas Merriam

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New Mexico Magazine 1923 2023

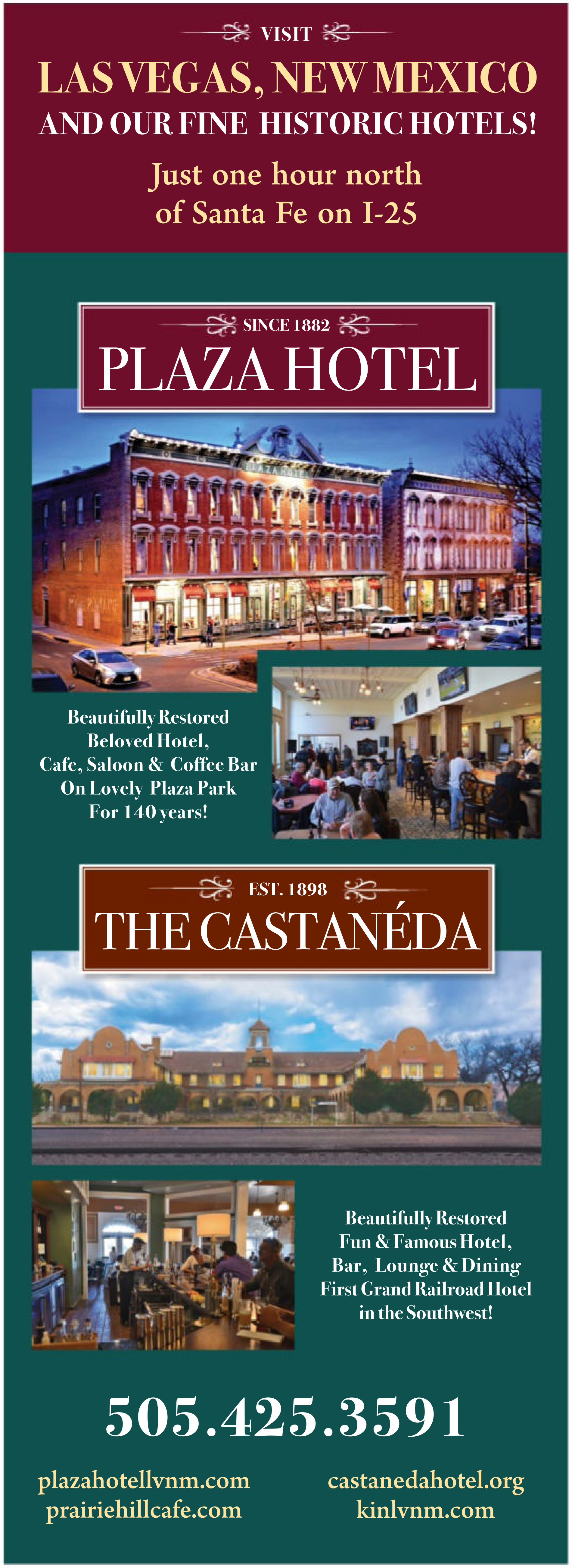
Server Karla Montes helps create a pleasant dining experience. **Opposite page:** Chef Eduardo Rodriguez can often be found outside the kitchen.

mother and my grandma," Rodriguez says. "We have a big family, and my mother's side was always working in the fields, with corn, calabacitas, beans, and chiles."

His grandmother foraged wild chamomile and dandelion for teas. " 'Drink this,' she'd tell us, 'This is healthy,' " he recalls. She also passed on her mole knowledge to his mother. "My mom was making mole for 30 people," Rodriguez says. "She'd make mole coloradito, which is more sweet, flavored with sesame seeds, chocolate, and plantains."

Intrigued by the many varieties of mole, Rodriguez set out to learn more about the art of making this complex staple of Mexican cuisine, which originated in Puebla and Oaxaca. "I went to Oaxaca on vacation for almost 10 days, and everywhere was mole," he says. "I could smell chocolate and coffee in the air, and that's the smell of mole negro." From a master mole maker, he learned the essential techniques of toasting seeds, roasting chiles, and making masa and chicken stock from scratch. "I came to love these foods. Oaxaca became my second city in Mexico. The food is amazing."

In high school, Rodriguez traveled to Santa Fe to visit his older brothers, José and Juan, who were then working in the kitchen of the iconic Coyote Cafe. "I was seeing this energy in the kitchen and in the front of the house, and I thought, *This is fun*." His brothers got him a part-time, two-month job at Coyote, turning his trip into



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From left: Zacatlán greets you with ristras and wine. The rhubarb and strawberry gazpacho.

a working vacation. "I did everything from washing the dishes to cleaning the chile and helping the saucier," he says.

He was hooked. Rodriguez moved to Santa Fe to wash dishes at Geronimo, then quickly rose through the ranks under the mentorship of the late legendary chef Eric DiStefano. "I didn't need to go to culinary school," he says. "Eric was teaching me all the time, every single second, to make food that was simple but rich in flavor. He told me to learn a lot and to absorb everything."

Like a painter mixing colors, Rodriguez began fusing Geronimo's upscale cuisine with the foods he'd grown up eating in Mexico. "I wanted to do something from my roots, like mole with a rack of lamb, filet mignon, or duck," he says. "We made ostrich quesadillas and a duck and mole relleno that Arnold Schwarzenegger came in and tried. After he ate my relleno, he said, 'I'm always going to come back to Geronimo for this relleno.' "

After 13 years at Geronimo, Rodriguez moved to Coyote Cafe with DiStefano, who became a partner in the restaurant in 2007. At Coyote, he carved out a reputation as one of Santa Fe's leading chefs. During the global pandemic in 2020, as restaurants temporarily shuttered and the Aztec Street property became available, Rodriguez took a long-anticipated leap.

With the help of family and friends, the small building that had once housed a scruffy bohemian cafe was transformed into a casita-style space brimming with charm. "I asked my brother José, who's the chef at La Casa Sena, if he could give us some ideas to run the front of the house," Rodriguez says. "My other brother, Juan, helped paint. I asked my sister, Diana, if she wanted to be part of this business, and she said, 'I don't know anything about restaurants, but we can do it together.' " She and Rodriguez's daughter, Grecia, are Zacatlán's managers.

While Zacatlán dazzles diners, Rodriguez isn't one to sit back and relish success. "I'm always happy to try new things," he says. "I'm inspired by different ideas and ways to prepare the food. I want to visit Mexico again and bring back ideas."

Lynn Cline *co-edited* The New Mexico Magazine Centennial Cookbook. *Buy it at nmmag.us/store.*

AGUA DE JAMAICA (HIBISCUS WATER)

Serves 8–10

6 cups hibiscus flowers
2 gallons water
4 cups sugar
2 Mexican cinnamon sticks
2 cups star anise
Lime wedges, for garnish

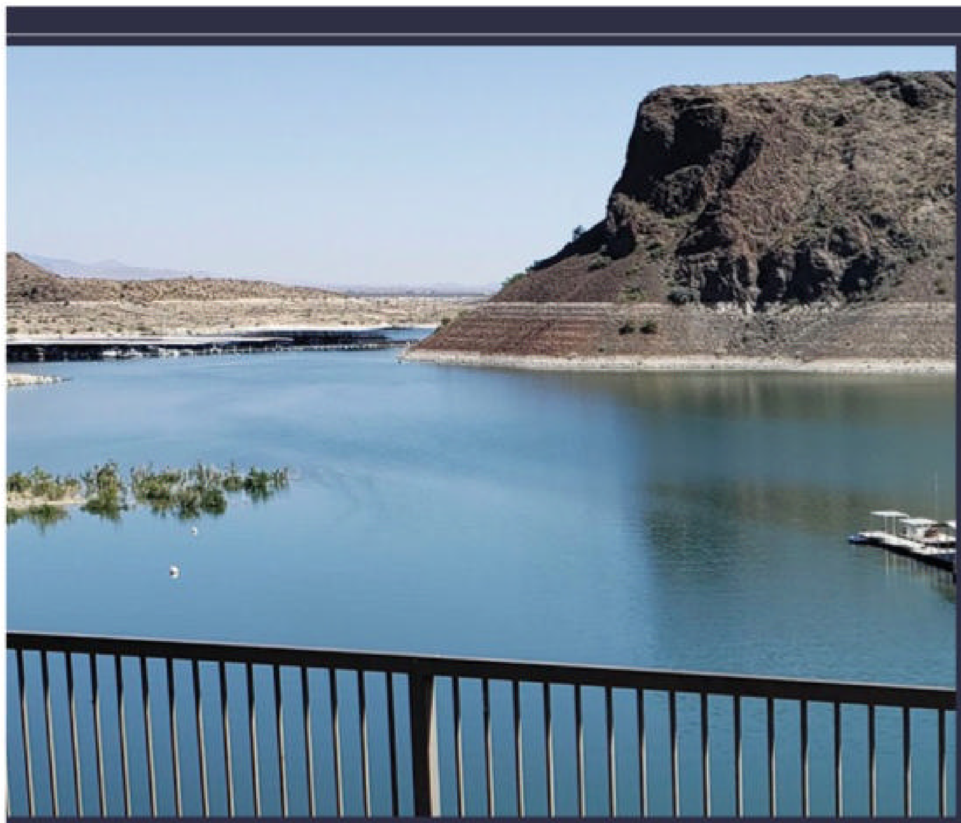
1. Mix all the ingredients in a large pot and bring to a boil. Reduce heat to low and simmer for 30 minutes.
2. Strain and refrigerate until completely cold.
3. Serve in a glass with ice and lime wedges, if desired.

RHUBARB AND STRAWBERRY GAZPACHO

Serves 8–10

2 pounds rhubarb, cubed
4 whole seedless heirloom tomatoes
2 medium seedless cucumbers, cubed
2 red bell peppers, cubed
2 whole shallots
2 ounces sherry wine
4 pounds fresh strawberries
2 cups sugar
1 cup olive oil
2 tablespoons Tabasco sauce
Fresh mint or basil sprigs, for garnish

1. Blend rhubarb, tomatoes, cucumbers, bell peppers, shallots, and sherry wine in a blender, then pass the mixture through a strainer.



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2. Blend the strawberries separately and add them to the other blended ingredients.
3. Stir in the sugar, olive oil, and Tabasco.
4. Chill in refrigerator for at least 2 hours.
5. Garnish with fresh mint or basil sprigs to taste, to give a scented touch.

LUBINA AL POSOLE VERDE (BRANZINO WITH GREEN POSOLE)

Serves 8–10

8 six-ounce pieces of boneless lubina (branzino), scales removed
2 tablespoons salt or more, to taste
2 tablespoons garlic, chopped, or more, to taste
Italian parsley, chopped, to taste
A few tablespoons butter
2 pounds hominy for posole
⅓ cup salt
1½ cups mirepoix (diced onions, carrots, and celery)
4 green tomatoes, chopped
2 gallons water
1 cup Pernod
½ cup green curry, toasted
6 kaffir lime leaves
⅓ cup garlic, chopped
2 gallons clam juice
Cilantro leaves, for garnish
Serrano peppers, thinly sliced, for garnish (optional, as this is pepper is hot)
Tortilla chip strips, for garnish

Green posole adds New Mexican style to branzino.

1. Preheat the oven to 375 degrees and line a sheet pan with parchment paper.
2. Cook the hominy in 2 gallons of water and ⅓ cup of salt on medium heat for 30 minutes or follow the directions on package. When cooked, drain and set aside.
3. In large pot, cook the mirepoix and green tomatoes with 1-2 tablespoons butter until caramelized. Add the Pernod and bring to a flame.
4. Add the toasted green curry, kaffir lime leaves, garlic, and clam juice. Bring to a boil.
5. Add the hominy to the whole mixture and simmer for 25 minutes.
6. Season the branzino with a paste of salt, garlic, Italian parsley, and butter. Place the fish on the sheet and bake for about 8 to 15 minutes.
7. To serve, place a piece of fish atop a bed of posole and top with cilantro leaves, serrano peppers, and tortilla chips, for garnish.

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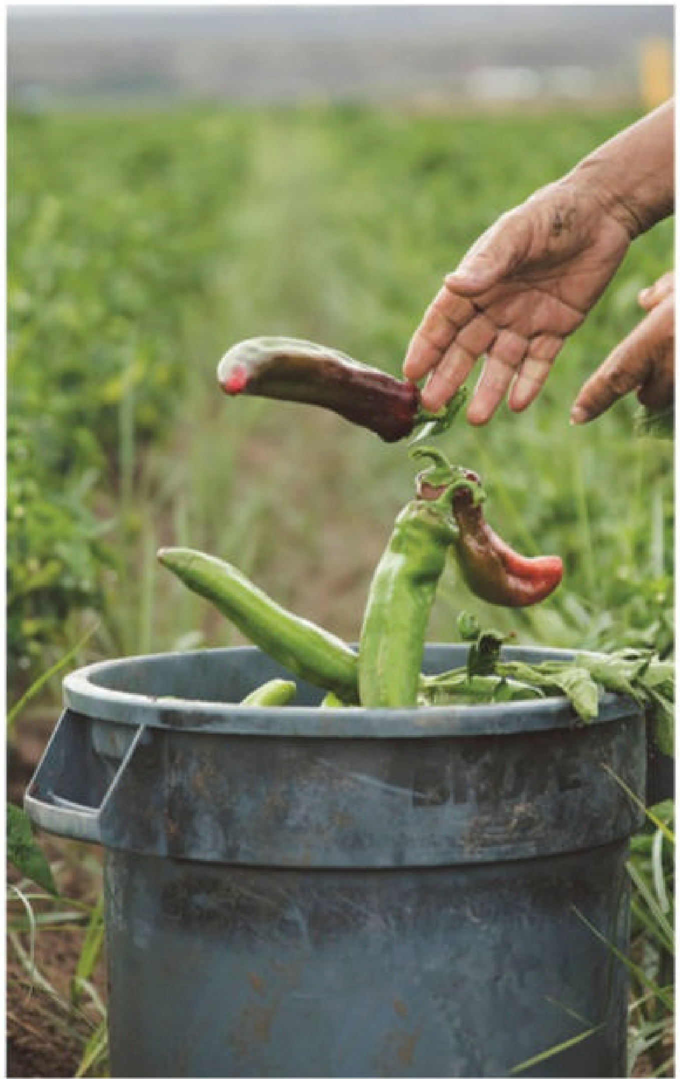

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PANTRY

Jars of Joy

Get Fernando Olea's holy mole for your dinner table.

Can't get a reservation for Sazón, in Santa Fe? Take home one of chef Fernando Olea's mouthwatering moles. The 2022 winner of the James Beard Award for Best Chef, Southwest, has made four of his acclaimed versions available to home cooks. "Mole is the most representative sauce of my Mexican culture," he says. Olea drew from family recipes for his sweet-smoky mole negro and spicier mole coloradito. Imported spices give a zing to his mole verde. To commemorate Santa Fe's 400th anniversary, in 2009, Olea created his signature New Mexico Mole, a tasty blend of white chocolate and locally grown apricots, pecans, and piñons. Olea offers a mole to match your home-cooked vegetables, fish, poultry, beef, or lamb. If you can't choose just one, mix and match a trio of your choice. —*LC*

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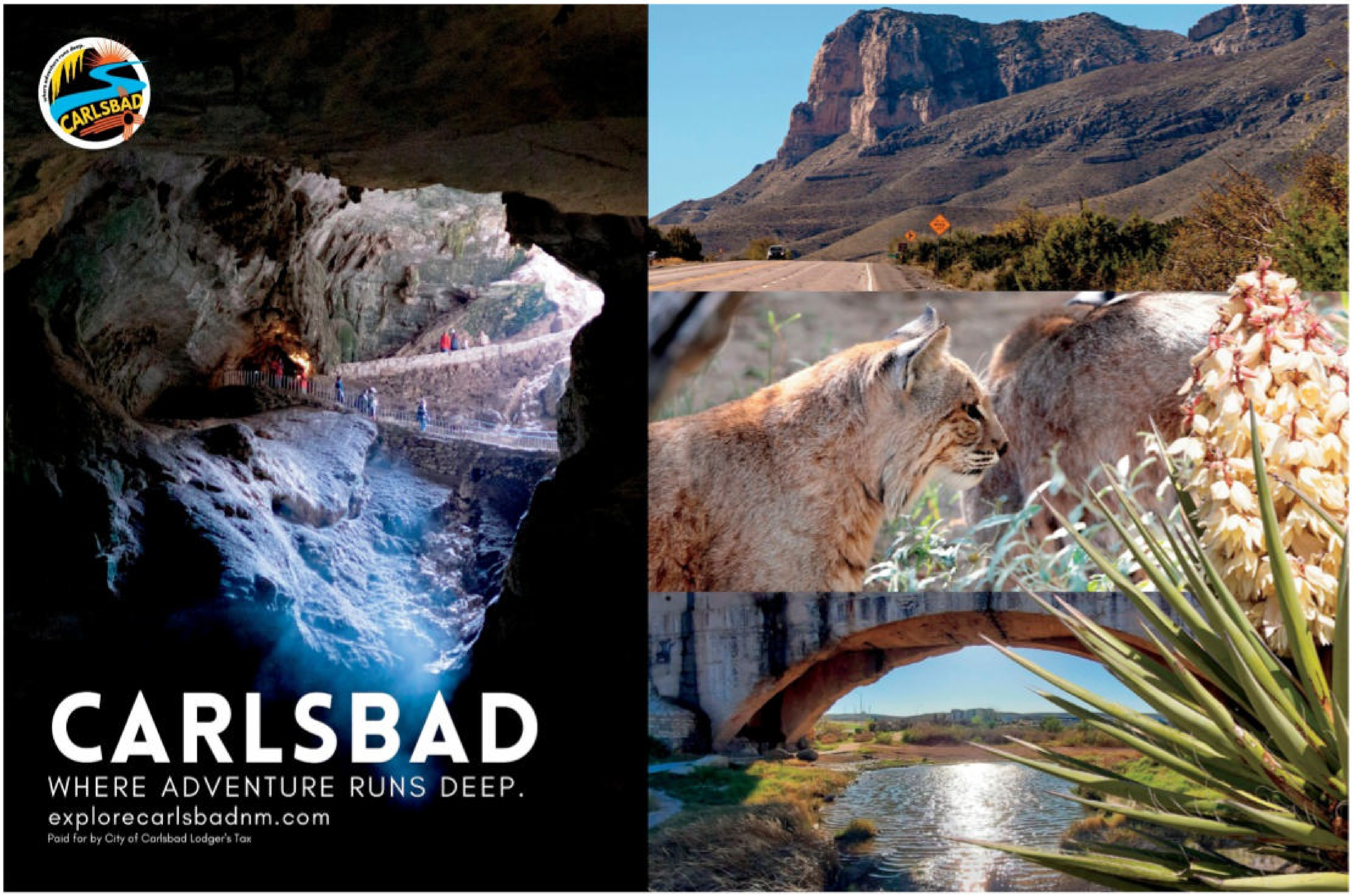
Find Sazón's moles at the Santa Fe School of Cooking, Santa Fe's Deli at Sassella, and in the restaurant's online store. **sazonsantafe.com/sazon-shop**

Photograph by **DOUGLAS MERRIAM**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Joyce Nevaquaya Harris, Comanche, Painting, *Butterfly Blessings*, ©2019

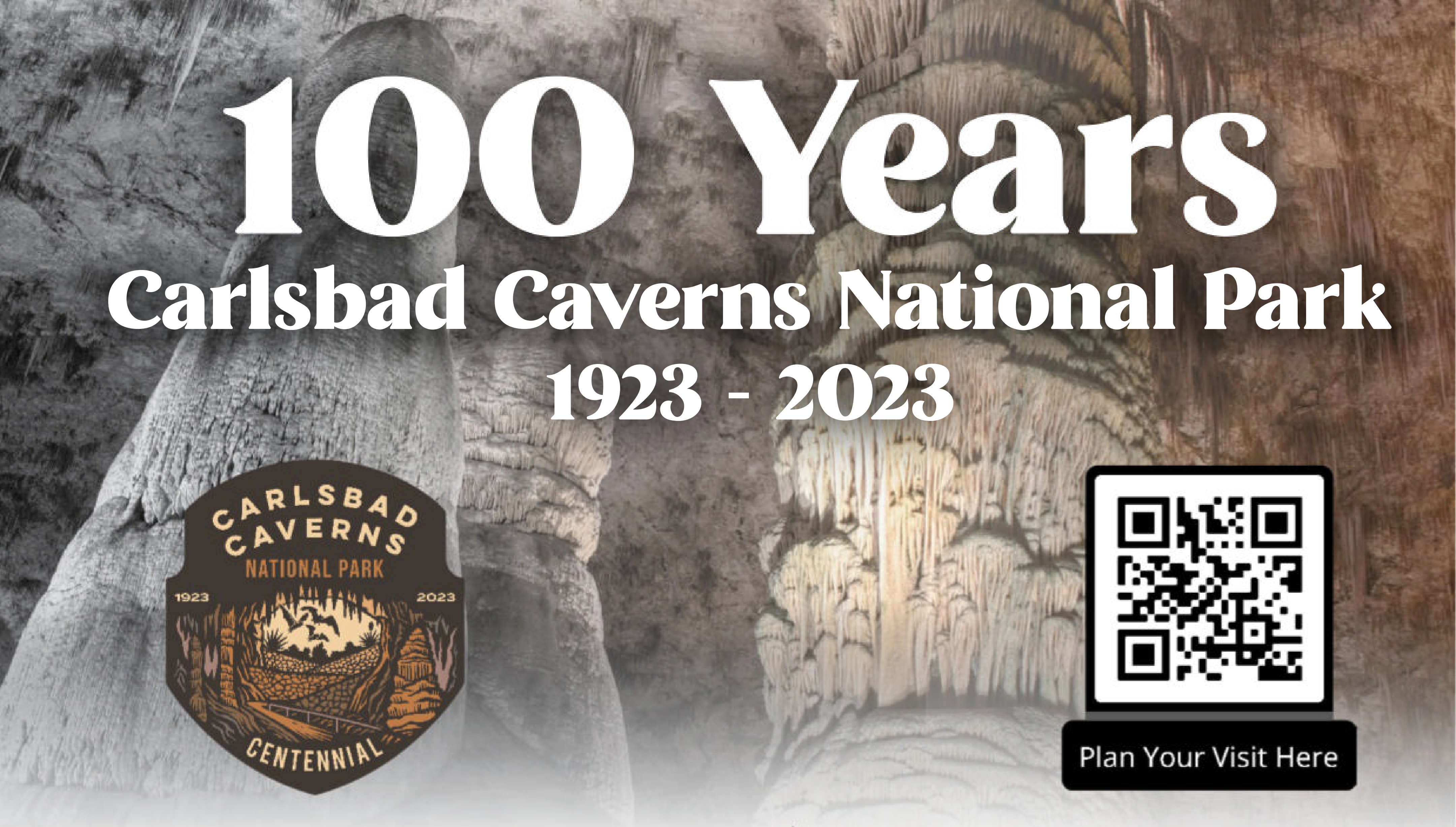
In Albuquerque, the museum stores the femur bone of a gomphothere, an extinct elephant relative.

Bone Spur

Thanks to a new grant, the New Mexico Museum of Natural History & Science is gearing up to flash even more fossils.

By Michael Abatemarco

Photographs by **TIRA HOWARD**



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Interns Noah Clayborne, Ian Hutchinson, and Robin Kibler, with chief fossil preparator Justy Alicea (far right), begin a mount for a phytosaur bone.

IT'S NOT SO FEARSOME NOW, SAVE FOR THE teeth. But imagine adding reptilian flesh, then inserting a cold, inquisitive eye into the flat, three-foot-long fossilized skull of the Bisti Beast, New Mexico's own Tyrannosauroid, and suddenly you're seeing the dominant predator of the Late Cretaceous period.

Seventy-four million years ago in North America, when the Bisti Beast first appeared on the scene, a shallow inland sea separated the continent's eastern and western shores. The bipedal dinosaur hunted smaller prey through tropical terrain with its binocular vision and a set of 64 razor-sharp daggers lodged in its jaws. An adult *Bistahieversor sealeyi* could weigh a ton or more, and it might grow as long as 30 feet.

An older cousin by about 10 million years to the T. rex, it stomped an area known today as the San Juan Basin, where the fossil of the most complete skull specimen ever found was excavated in 1998 by Thomas Williamson, the curator of paleontology at the New Mexico Museum of Natural History & Science, in Albuquerque. Williamson named the Beast, which represented a new genus and species, after its location and the site's discoverer, volunteer researcher Paul Sealey.

"Our museum has the largest collection of fossils in the Southwest," says executive director Anthony Fiorillo.

San Juan's Bisti/De-Na-Zin Wilderness Area, where the skull of the Bisti Beast was found, is a hotbed of fossil research. In fact, New Mexico's role in paleontology, the branch of science concerned with the fossils of animals and plants, is profound.

The state's fossil record, among the most complete in the world, spans the region's entire stratigraphic column, extending back millions of years. More than 700 species and 100 genera of previously unknown life are represented by these fossil finds, many of which, including the Bisti Beast, are on display or housed in the museum's storage.

"Our museum has the largest collection of fossils in the Southwest," says executive

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New Mexico MAGAZINE

Clockwise from top left: The Bisti Beast skull is on view in the *Back to Bones* exhibit. The dino's hip and vertebrae are in an archival storage mount. Preparator Justy Alicea also manages the lab.

director Anthony Fiorillo. "But so many of the specimens are fragile and difficult to transport, which limits what we can put on display." Now, with the help of a new $195,533 grant, even more of these precious records of the past can be properly cared for and displayed for visitors to the museum.

"BECAUSE OF NEW MEXICO'S ROCK LAYERS, we have the whole gamut," says Nicole Volden, the museum's geoscience collections manager. "It's more than 500 years of biodiversity of life on Earth."

More recent discoveries in New Mexico, such as the Bisti Beast, are highlighted in the museum's current exhibition *Back to Bones*, which showcases the major role New Mexico plays in paleontology. The fossils represent some of New Mexico's most significant paleontological discoveries, including Jurassic- and Cretaceous-era dinosaurs, inland sea ammonites, and 200 million-year-old reptiles and amphibians.

Fossils are critical to our understanding of the evolutionary past. It makes sense to want to preserve them, and the largest specimens, many of which are dinosaurs, are delicate, despite having long ago turned to stone. A common but not ideal solution for displaying them is to drape the rough plaster molds that house larger specimens with black velvet, which was done for the skull of the Bisti Beast.

Preserving specimens in controlled environments and minimizing the risk of damage is harder in practice than in theory. At the Museum of Natural History & Science, fragile specimens placed on trays can easily break when moved. Some mighty big bones are stored at the museum, but they can be riddled with hairline fractures that split during attempts to lift them. So they remain in storage, where only researchers can access them. Formfitting cases, which minimize vibration and can, in some instances, fit over the top and bottom of fossils, provide a tighter fit than even a custom coffin, ensuring the continued longevity of these treasures. But that takes money and materials.

Last year, the museum's geoscience department received a grant from the Institute of Museum and Library Services for improved

A Conflict as Old as Time

An eternal battle is poised to pop off outside the New Mexico Museum of Natural History & Science.

Just imagine the heavyset Triceratops gutting a T. rex. Or how about a savage T. rex fight with New Mexico's native Tyrannosauroid, the Bisti Beast?

Well, first, meet Spike, the massive Pentaceratops sculpted by David A. Thomas and placed outside the entrance of the New Mexico Museum of Natural History & Science, in Albuquerque. Spike was modeled on a dinosaur discovered in New Mexico's Bisti Badlands, where he stomped along the shore of a now-extinct Cretaceous-era sea, eating vegetation from subtropical swamps. His species' name means "five-horned face."

Alberta, a carnivorous Albertosaurus from the family Tyrannosauridae, is beside him, ready to pounce with an intimidating set of teeth. Discovered in Alberta, Canada, Alberta lived during the Late Cretaceous period. This slender, dangerous beast could grow as long as 30 feet and weigh as much as 2.5 metric tons. Spike rings in the same, weight-wise, making them a well-matched pair.

"Iconic" is more like it—the squat, horned, four-legged dino versus the Tyrannosaur. Inside the museum's exhibit halls, they've got the bones to prove this fight—or something like it—wasn't just the fever dream of a talented special-effects artist from the movies. Toy versions of the standoff are available for purchase in the museum.

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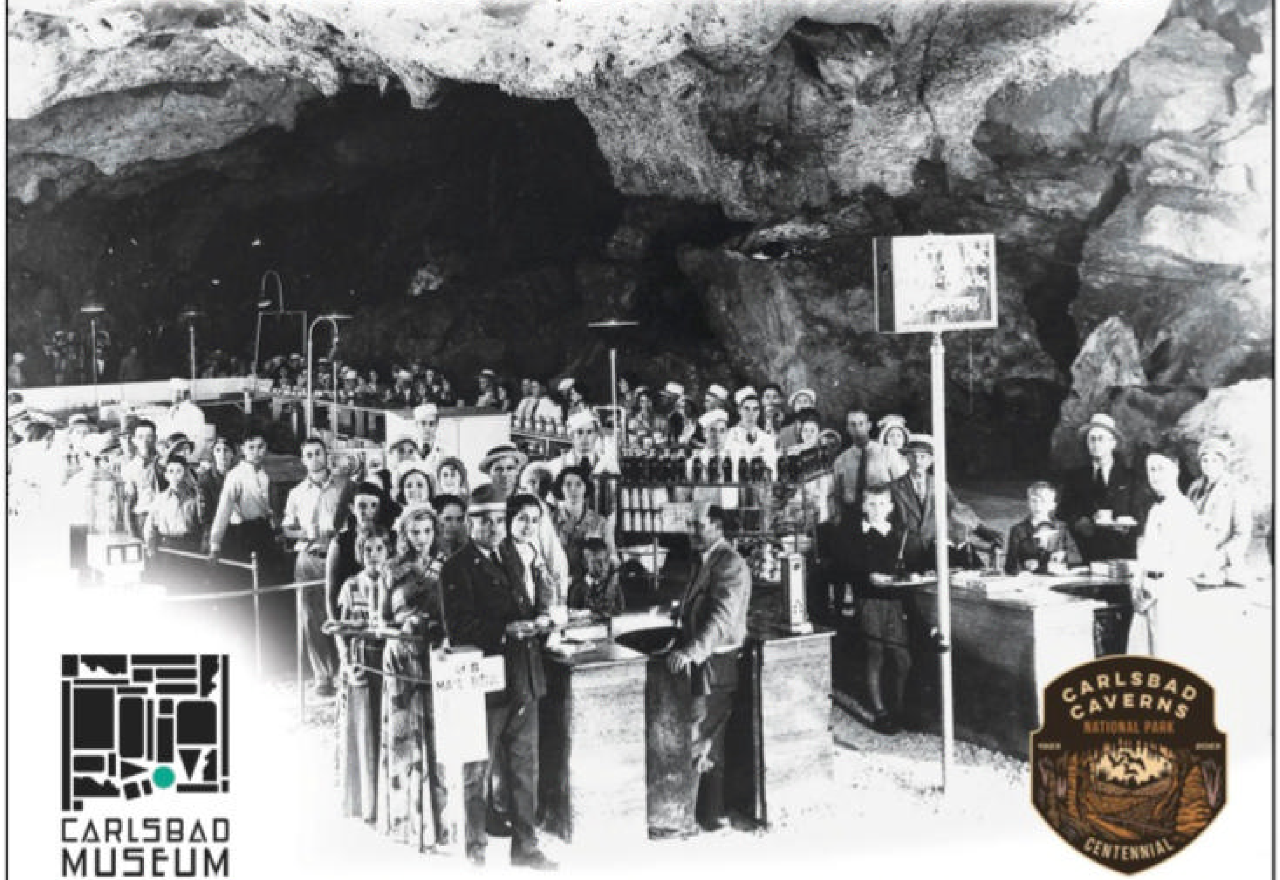

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care and access to approximately 1,400 oversize fossils from its collection of 90,000 specimens. "It not only gives us the tools we need to preserve our incredible fossils," Fiorillo says, "but it also makes them more accessible to members of the public who want to learn more about New Mexico's fossil history."

ON-SITE, PUBLIC ACCESS TO THE FOSSIL COLLECTION comes in two forms: exhibitions and behind-the-scenes tours. The main prep laboratory in the research and education department is larger than the public-access lab in the exhibition *FossilWorks*. That lab provides museum visitors a glimpse, through plate-glass windows, into researchers' exacting task of extracting fossils from the rock in which they're embedded.

"You can see lots of fossils in process," Volden explains of the public-facing lab. "They use various hand- and air-powered tools to remove the rock."

It takes millions of years for an organism to fossilize, a process that typically involves the replacement of shell or bone with minerals. Extracting fossils from rock is tricky since, depending on the type of mineral replacement, the bones can end up with the same chemical structure as their lithic

Top and facing page: Oversize fossils are stored on shelves. Geoscience collections manager Nicole Volden takes a look.

2023 Workshops are Open for Registration

GHOST RANCH

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From top: Coelophysis skeletons collected at Ghost Ranch. An animatronic replica of the Bisti Beast welcomes museum visitors.

casements. This is the careful action that visitors can view, watching air-powered vacuum tubes collect dirt and dust as staff members, behind lighted magnifiers, separate bone from stone.

“Changes break down a specimen over time. But for fossilization to occur, they have to be buried,” Volden says. “What happens during fossilization is, a fossil is buried and, usually, water percolates down through the ground and dissolves the minerals and recrystallizes inside the spaces of the bones. The bone itself can still be smooth and solid, so there’s a textural difference. You just have to find the boundary between rock and bone, and prepare for the extraction along it.”

A large majority of the museum’s outstanding collection rarely sees the light of day, since these fossils are stored primarily for research. But the grant changes that.

“Safety for the specimens means that we’re not dragging them across the shelves and damaging them,” Volden says. “And, for us, it means we’re not hurting our backs trying to lift them.”

A process of transferring fossils from old and crumbling mounts to new ones made of layered, formfitting fiberglass and plaster, so the specimen is fully supported, provides a better viewing experience in and out of collections. The mounts are lined with felt or foam to create a soft surface. The specimens they hold include vertebrates such as fish, amphibians, reptiles, birds, and mammals.

Among the museum’s vast holdings, the Bisti Beast remains a star attraction. The animatronic replica of the “Monster from the Mesozoic,” which snarls and snaps its jaws, waits in the lobby to startle museumgoers with a quick jerk of its head and a look of unmistakable hunger and intelligence.

Not to be outdone, the long-necked Sauropod Seismosaurus, a supergiant of the dinosaur age, fills the museum’s Jurassic Hall with its entire skeletal frame. The Seismosaurus, the first fossil to be cleaned and prepped in the *FossilWorks* lab, could reach lengths of more than 80 feet and weigh more than 14 metric tons. The Seismosaurus, like the Allosaurus, Stegosaurus, and Bisti Beast, is among the most famous dinosaur species native to the region.

But a gap of approximately 350 million years lies between Seismosaurus and the museum’s oldest specimens (500 million-year-old, Cambrian-era trace fossils). The span of time between Seismosaurus and the Bisti Beast is about as long as the period between the Beast’s time and our own.

The mysteries contained in those lengths of time are mind-boggling to consider. As long as New Mexico’s strata continue yielding so many secrets, the state’s paleontology points the way to a greater understanding of the prehistoric past.

HISTORY WITHIN REACH
BISTI BEAST

Michael Abatemarco*’s favorite cinematic dinosaur battles range from Triceratops versus the T. rex in the silent movie* The Lost World *(1925) to the same face-off in* The Last Dinosaur *(1977).*

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ONE OF OUR 50 IS MISSING / Yes, it's a state. No passport required.

A Prescription for Frustration

Former Rio Rancho resident **NANCY BELL** once traveled from New Mexico to Cape Cod, Massachusetts. While there, she needed to refill a prescription for pain medication. When asked for a photo ID at the pharmacy, she pulled out a driver's license and watched for a few minutes as the clerk haltingly put her information into the computer. "Is there a problem?" she eventually inquired. The employee confessed that she had no idea how to process an order from a foreign country. Talk about adding insult to injury!

Geography Lesson

During a layover at John F. Kennedy International Airport, **ALFONSO ROMERO** struck up a conversation with a teacher, who asked where he was from. "Born and raised in Belén, New Mexico," he replied. The stranger said, "Oh, I've been to New Mexico!" *Here we go,* Romero thought. Sure enough, "I went to Tijuana!" she added. "I'm sure you know where that is." Romero grinned and said, "Sure do. It's just west of Rodeo."

Fun Fact

"Well, there's missing, and then there's *really* missing," **DAN BENTON** writes from Albuquerque. A friend he met at Mississippi State University recently informed him of the strange existence of New Mexico, Mississippi, a ghost town that has lain at the bottom of the Mississippi River since at least 1844. The onetime seat of Washington County simply "caved into the river when she beckoned," Benton explains. We looked it up on Wikipedia and found no information about how the waterlogged town got its name. Did the Big Muddy get mixed up with the Río Grande?

HAVE A "MISSING" MOMENT?

Send it to **FIFTY@NMMAGAZINE.COM**, or Fifty, **New Mexico Magazine**, 495 Old Santa Fe Trail, Santa Fe, NM 87501. Include your name, hometown, and state. *¡Gracias!*

CHRIS PHILPOT

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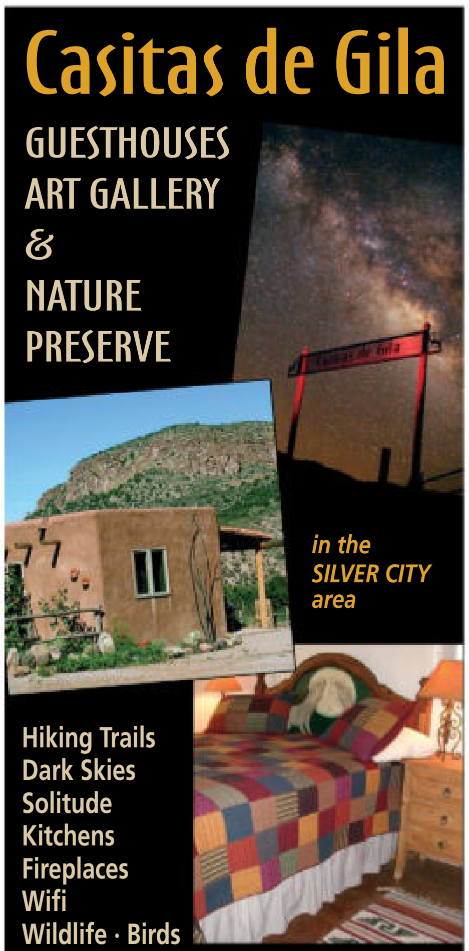

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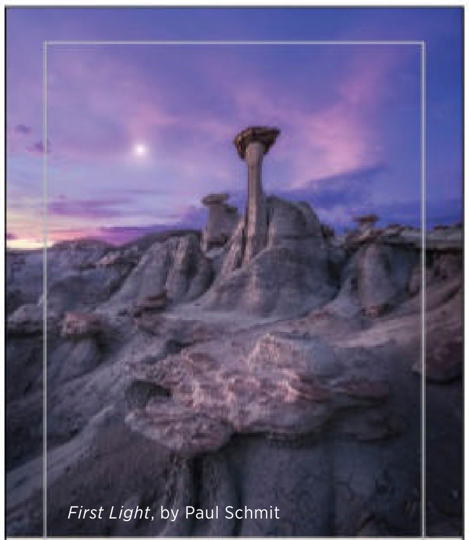

First Light, by Paul Schmit

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Sep. 23rd - 24th	Cathedral Park
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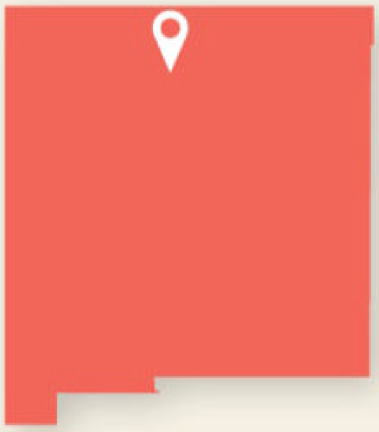
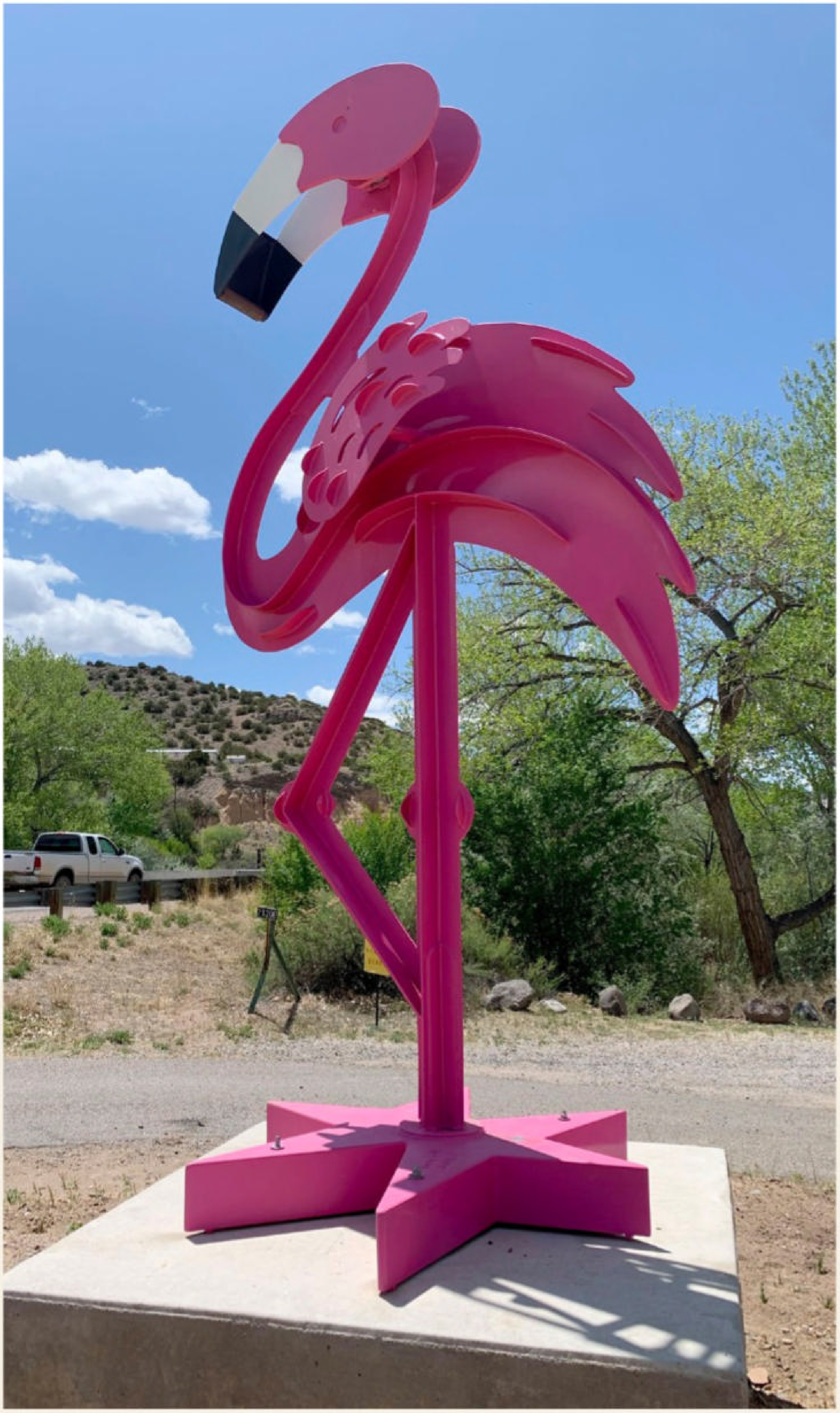
BACKSTORY / Pink Flamingo

Flight of Fancy

Like a piece of the Everglades perched in Abiquiú, a 12-foot tropical bird greets motorists as they pull into Bode's General Store. "It's a pink flamingo in the middle of nowhere," says Andria Mae Romero, who owns Bode's with her husband, Andy. "You have to ask yourself, 'Why a pink flamingo?' " Created by Santa Fe artist Fredrick Prescott in 2016, the kinetic steel sculpture adds panache to the quiet stretch of US 84 that runs between Española and Tierra Amarilla. The previous owners of Bode's, which has served the area since 1890, "wanted something that was really fun and exciting," Prescott says. "I asked, 'Instead of an elk or a moose, why not something that's out of the box?' " Still, the Florida bird appears oddly at home in its roost, swaying with the New Mexico breeze. "I love how the head moves when it's windy," Romero says. One of the seating areas at the everything-but-the-kitchen-sink store, which includes gas, a gift shop, a restaurant, and groceries, looks out on the sculpture. "I nicknamed it the Flamingo Room," she says. —*Julian Dossett*



Bode's General Store can be found at 21196 US 84 in Abiquiú. *bodes.com*



MICHAEL TASHJI

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